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GOETHE
AND
FAUST

An Interpretation

By F. M. STAWELL and
G. LOWES DICKINSON

A study of Goethe in relation to his masterpiece; a study of that masterpiece itself, together with pages of some of the finest translation that has yet been made from the German; the coming Goethe centenary—all make of this book an important publication, one to claim the attention of every lover of literature. The book is particularly valuable to students of German literature, and to students of Goethe, but is also admirably adapted to the needs of the general reader. It lends itself admirably to university uses, but is not primarily a textbook. It is a book of sound scholarship and literary interpretation for the man of taste —and as such is not likely to be superseded for many years.

Miss F. M. Stawell was at one time a staff lecturer at Newnham College, Cambridge. She is the author of two books: "Homer and the Iliad" and, with Mr. F. S. Marvin, "The Making of the Western Mind," a Short Survey of European Culture, now in its second edition. Mr. Lowes Dickinson is, of course, the celebrated Cambridge scholar and historian, author of "A Modern Symposium" and many other well-known books.

GOETHE AND FAUST

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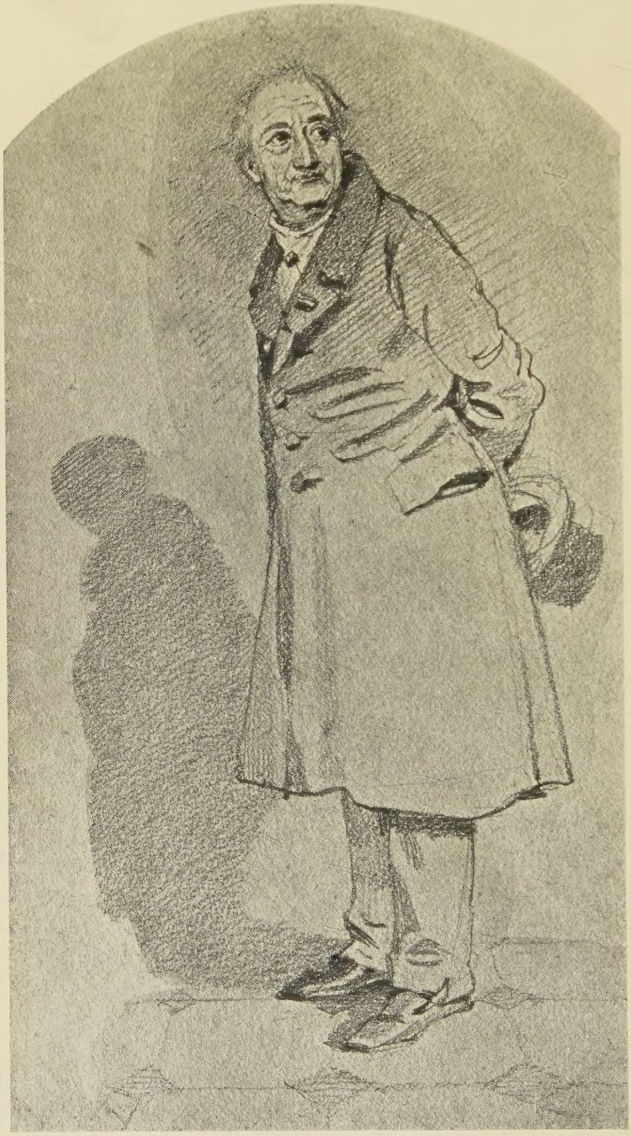

Goethe in Old Age.

From a drawing by Maclise in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

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GOETHE & FAUST

AN INTERPRETATION

With Passages newly translated
into English Verse

BY

F. MELIAN STAWELL

AND

G. LOWES DICKINSON

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GOETHE AND FAUST

"Open world and life abounding,
Loyal labour many a season,
Searching ever, serving reason,
Never closed and always rounding,
Ancient treasure guarded true,
Friendly welcome for the new,
Honest aims and heart at rest,—
That's the way one travels best!"

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GOETHE AND FAUST

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

This book was written in the hope that it might extend, in this country, the circle, still too narrow, of those who are interested in Goethe and his work. The task was not an easy one. For of all great writers Goethe is the most discursive, of all great poets the most imperfect, of all great thinkers the least systematic. The process and development of his ideas is more important than the particular expression of them at any given moment, and to a sympathetic reader his own life and character more interesting than anything he wrote. He was the last man who dared to take all knowledge for his province, and in that respect the last successor of Aristotle and of Leonardo. Since his death poetry, philosophy and science have become more and more specialised, till at last all direction of life seems to be lost, and we are in danger of destroying ourselves by our own knowledge and technique. In this crisis of the world's history it seemed possible that a renewed study of Goethe might open the way to a new advance. He may be more to this age than he was to Arnold's, deeply though Arnold realised his healing power.

The method we have adopted has been to choose *Faust*, his greatest and most characteristic work, for our central theme, translating where necessary and illustrating the points by a commentary drawn, so far as possible,

from Goethe himself. We have made a translation of the whole drama, but we have kept it back because, in the first place, there are already in existence good renderings of Part I,[1] and, in the second, because it was felt that a complete translation would overweight the present book. All translators are impelled to apologise for their work, and the best they can hope for is to send the reader to the original. Translators, after all, as Goethe said, are only "cunning panders, who show us a half-veiled beauty in order to awaken our desires." [2] Nevertheless, he believed in translations, read them and made them himself, for he held that in every work that is great enough there is something which will show, even through an imperfect medium.

As for the commentary, many poems, no doubt, are better with the briefest; and in all poetry there is something, and that the best, which, as Goethe himself insisted, is "incommensurable," eluding analysis.[3] But even here analysis may help, if only to point out the unanalysable. "Art is the true mediator," wrote Goethe, "the true interpreter of the Inexpressible. Talking about Art is an attempt to mediate the mediator." "Yet from that attempt," he added, "much has been gained." [4]

Much in particular may be gained from the study of *Faust*. Partly because the poem is often obscure, and in the Second Part even pedantic; but also because of its peculiar character and history. The composition of it went on, intermittently, for over sixty years, Goethe, as he tells us, carrying it in his heart, "like a fairy-tale"

[1] In particular, one published recently by G. M. Cookson (Routledge).

[2] No. 299 from the very useful collection of *Maximen und Reflexionen*, published by the Goethe-Gesellschaft in Weimar.

[3] See his words quoted by Eckermann, 5th May 1827.

[4] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 384, 413.

that he kept to himself. And he "hid in it secrets" from his experience and knowledge till it might almost be called an epitome of his life and of the life of his time as he saw it. Thus it came to have a meaning not exhausted by its dramatic content. At the same time the whole drama shows a unifying conception, and one of which Goethe never lost sight. When a not too intelligent critic, a certain Professor Luden, said of the *Fragment* first published, that he was content "to enjoy each scene as it came," Goethe observed that this was to assume that "the poet had not the smallest conception of what he wanted when he began, but wrote away at haphazard, trusting to luck, and using the name of *Faust* only for a string on which to thread the separate beads." Luden's enjoyment he called roundly "a pitiful, mutilated enjoyment." "There was a far higher enjoyment in the complete *Faust*"—(not then published, nor, in the Second Part, fully written)—"the conception which had inspired the poet, which knit the separate parts of the poem into one whole, gave the law to the parts, and gave the parts their significance." [1]

The old poet always claimed that this dominating conception had never, in fundamentals, been altered. Five days before his death he wrote to Humboldt, "It is more than sixty years since the general plan of *Faust* lay before me in my youth, clear enough in outline, though the actual sequence of the situations was not so distinct." And three months earlier he had told him that the "motives of the Second Part had been thought out fifty years before and partly worked out." [2]

[1] Under the date 19th August 1806, in *Goethes Gespräche*, Biedermann. An invaluable collection.

[2] Letters to Humboldt, 1st December 1831; 17th March 1832, the last letter he ever wrote.

But this general plan, not being a mere abstraction, grew more complex as Goethe grew in experience and in wisdom. The details branched out all over it, like suckers round a tree, and the long gaps between the dates of writing did not improve matters. Goethe was aware of these drawbacks, as we can tell from his humorous impatience at his own work. "This hybrid," he called it to Schiller, and at one time, in 1800, he planned commending it to the public with the remark that it was

> "Just such another poem as man's life:
> Though it begins and ends, it's not a Whole." [1]

And for a preface he wrote the lines:

> "In goldnen Frühlings Sonnen Stunden
> Lag ich gebunden
> An dies Gesicht,
> In holder Dunckelheit der Sinnen
> Konnt' ich wohl diesen Traum beginnen,
> Vollenden nicht." [2]

> "In the glad springtime's golden weather
> I lay, tranced by this vision, hours together,
> Veiled hours and sweet;
> And well could I begin my dream, but never
> Make it complete."

Incomplete it remained even in its final form. There were scenes he had never been able to write, such as the winning of Helen from Proserpine; and the poem stopped rather because Goethe died than for any other reason. It is thus something unique in literature, a work that grew with its author's growth and ended only with his life. This led, perhaps inevitably, to serious artistic faults, but also to much of its greatness.

[1] *Paralipomena*, 46. In the useful edition of *Faust* published by the Insel-Verlag at Leipsic, with all the three versions of the First Part and much other interesting matter.

[2] *Ibid.* No. 1.

"Faust," said Schiller of the *Fragment*, if it was a torso, was "a torso of Hercules." [1] The Hercules, we might add, was Goethe himself. Essentially the poem is part of his spiritual biography, and the conception that underlies it his religion. There are dramatists who deny, or on whose behalf is denied, all connection between their dramas and their own beliefs. But with Goethe such a denial could not be made even plausible; perhaps because he was too imperfect a dramatist. It is not so much dramatic interest that informs his plays as wisdom of life. The tragedy of Gretchen in the First Part of *Faust* is indeed poignant, more so than anything else in his writings. But in the Second Part, except for the death-scene, dramatic interest dwindles. Goethe said himself that he was not formed to write tragedies; and gave the interesting reason,[2] that he could not tolerate discords unresolved. Hence, for example, he introduced, when revising the First Part, the voice from heaven at the close proclaiming Gretchen's salvation. A philosophy of hope is always the inspiration of his art as well as of his practical activity. That philosophy is implied throughout *Faust* and explicit in the Second Part. It must be understood if we are to understand the work, and it may be indicated here.

First, it is all-important in Goethe's conception that Faust himself should be saved. To suppose that the plan of the drama was ever radically altered and that Goethe at first intended the damnation of Faust is not only uncalled-for and counter to all his own personal statements: [3] it is contrary to all his views of the universe

[1] To Goethe, 29th November 1794. (The first year of their friendship.)

[2] To Zelter, 31st October 1831.

[3] Some critics have supposed that Faust's intended damnation was referred to in the concluding couplet of the "Prelude on the Stage,"

at any period of his life. Nor was the damnation of Faust an essential part of the legend. In all Christian tales of this type, especially in Catholic countries, there is a readiness to leave room, even at the eleventh hour, for repentance. It is noticeable that in the earliest printed form of the Faust-story, published by Spies at Frankfurt in 1587, this possibility was at least suggested and it was kept open in most of the puppet-plays that have survived. And the puppet-play, as we know, was what first captivated Goethe when he was still a boy. Marlowe indeed—whose drama, suggested by Spies, lies in its turn behind the puppet-plays, having been brought to Germany by English actors—did send his Faust to hell. But he has made all readers sympathise with him. And in the eighteenth century, when Germany had a kind of second Renaissance, it was not likely that sympathy would be withheld from any hero who for the sake of beauty and knowledge had tried to sell his soul. Lessing, in the unpublished fragment of his own *Faust*, declared that the Devil could not conquer; and that was the fundamental article in Goethe's creed.

Next, the method of salvation is experience, "the only schoolmaster," as Goethe called it. "If the wisdom of this world were really foolishness with God," he wrote in his old-age, "it would not be worth while living for threescore years and ten." [1] Through a maze of error, so Goethe told a young friend when *Faust* was only half-finished, "the poor man" will work his way "nearer to the ideal and at last develop there." [2] That is the

where the Manager tells the Poet to travel "from Heaven through all the world to Hell." But there is no reason to think that the reference was ever to anything but the "epilogue" of the defeated Mephistopheles as he follows his devils home, ll. 11825 foll. See also below, c. xvi.

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 618.

[2] Letter to Schubarth, 3rd November 1818.

meaning of the mythology closing the Second Part when Faust is borne on the wings of angels to a goal that is still unreached.

Now experience means emotion and activity of all kinds, practical, scientific, æsthetic. In Goethe's view it was not possible to contemplate fruitfully without action nor to act fruitfully without contemplation. His ideal for his own work was "a living art of discovery"—*eine lebendige Heuristik*—"that knew of an unknown forefelt law and strove to find it in the outer world and bring it into the outer world.[1] Faust's struggles, failures and achievements are all conceived from this central standpoint, and it is thus that he became a symbol of Goethe's own life. Such a life has little in it of that "Olympian calm" which is often attributed to Goethe, and which indeed he could, and did at times, assume. He protected himself against the world with a mask of reserve: he learned to control the passions he never ceased to feel, and to feel in a measure which few have known, but he was never at peace and never thought of himself as on a pedestal above other men. "One has only to grow older," he wrote when he himself was growing old, "to become more tolerant. I see no fault that I might not have committed myself."[2] In his own judgment he failed, erred, sinned; but he saw no use in remorse: "Impatience won't do, still less will remorse! The first makes old sins worse, the second breeds new."[3] Instead, he worked against his weaknesses by

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 328.
[2] *Ibid.*, 240.
[3] "Nichts taugt Ungeduld,
Noch weniger Reue!
Jene vermehrt die Schuld,
Diese schafft neue."
In the collection *Sprichwörtlich*.

writing them out in literature, and that is how his writings came to be, as he called them, his confessional. The confession was genuine, not (as Rousseau's have been thought) a kind of complacency. Goethe cut deep at his own heart in *Werther*, in *Tasso*, in *Wilhelm Meister*, in *Die Wahlverwandschaften*, above all in *Faust*. From beginning to end Faust is a man in whom two souls are at war, as they always are, though not with that intensity, in human nature. "Twin brethren dwell within me," he says—

> "twins of strife,
> And either fights to free him from the other;
> One grips the earth in savage lust of life,
> Clutches the ground and wallows in the mire;
> The other lifts himself and struggles free,
> Tearing the chains that bind him to his brother,
> Beating the air with wings of vast desire
> Toward the far realm of his great ancestry."
>
> (ll. 1112–1117.)

Faust, then, may be taken as a type of the human struggle towards fulfilment and the human failure. He is that rather than a living character. He is not, for instance, alive as Gretchen is. The difference, no doubt, is partly due to Goethe's temperament. Women fired his imagination, and with them his understanding became intuition. But his touch was less sure in drawing men. Once, indeed, he said that he "didn't really know what a man was like." [1] It should be added that Faust, so far as he is a character, must not be identified with Goethe. Goethe often drew from himself, but never from himself as a whole, and he was so little disposed to idealise his own character that his men usually repel us because he has given them his weaknesses without his powers. For, if Goethe confessed himself in his

[1] To Reimer, *Goethes Gespräche*, 24th November 1809.

works, it was only after he had triumphed over what he confessed. Thus Faust has power, but he has not patience, whereas Goethe's life was one of continuous and coherent effort. He has more than Goethe's egotism and none of his generosity; and he drifts into crimes of which his creator was incapable. What he has in common with Goethe is the passion for knowledge, love, beauty, action. He dies with it unsatisfied, and he continues it in other worlds after death. That passion dominated Goethe's life; and so it comes about that much of his biography is strictly relevant to his poetry, more so, perhaps, than with any other poet we know. In particular, his experience in thought, in love and in action throws a flood of light upon *Faust*, which indeed is not fully intelligible without it. Readers may turn to the standard biographies for his activity as administrator at Weimar. But the other matters are more closely connected with the drama and it will be well to deal more fully with them at once.

CHAPTER II

NATURE AND MAN

The whole of Goethe's thought centres on his belief about Nature. That belief it is not easy to summarise, partly because it was constantly developing, partly because he adopted, often consciously, different positions, according to the form of his activity. "I cannot be satisfied," he wrote to Jacobi,[1] "with only one way of thinking. As poet and artist I am a polytheist, as scientific investigator a pantheist, and one just as much as the other. If I need a God for my life as a moral person, there is provision for that also. Things in heaven and earth form a kingdom so wide that only all the organs of all beings could grasp it."

In Goethe's time science, philosophy, art and religion had not been specialised and separated, as they have been since. Science has now become the pursuit, by laborious experiment with complicated instruments, of definite sequences in phenomena; and few men of science would venture to hold, or at any rate to express, any view about Nature as a whole. Theology, which did this formerly, has lost its authority with the plain man, while Philosophy is on the point of abdicating all claims except that of investigating the logical presuppositions of science. Men are thus left, on the one hand, with a

[1] 6th January 1823.

detailed knowledge of and power over nature such as they have never before attained; and, on the other, without any generally accepted view of their own purpose, fate and ideals.

But Goethe, born in the summer of 1749,[1] saw, as in a June night, at once the afterglow of the theological sunset and the first flush from the dawn of science; and upon this legacy and this prospect he seized, at once with the passion of a poet and the patient determination of an investigator. Nature, he felt, was divine, as Shelley felt, and Wordsworth. But also he was driven to examine phenomena in detail, and thus to become not only a poet but a man of science. His inquiries, however, took the form, not so much of investigating chains of causation, as of bringing to light similarities and analogies, with a view to demonstrating both unity in diversity and diversities in seeming unity.

The processes of analysis and synthesis characteristic of thought he ascribed also to Nature. She "analysed" when a river washed grains of gold from sand; she "synthesised" when an organism grew.[2] She must be conceived, he said to Schiller, "not as a pile of separate shreds and patches, but as a force living and working, struggling out of the Whole into the parts."[3] His researches in botany were directed by and culminated in the belief that "all the forms of plants might be developed from a single form" and all the various parts of one plant be modifications of the leaf.[4] In the human jaw he discovered the intermaxillary bone because he was convinced it must be there, since it was in the jaws of

[1] 28th August.

[2] *Analyse und Synthese*, Goethes Werke, Jubiläums-Ausgabe, vol. 39.

[3] *Erste Bekanntschaft mit Schiller.*

[4] See *Ital. Reise*, Padua, 27th September 1786; Palermo, 19th February 1787. Also *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, passim, J.-A., vol. 39.

other animals. Similarly, he showed that the bones of the skull were modified forms of vertebræ.

Thus Thought, in his opinion, did not impose itself on Nature; it found itself there, and his own way of thinking he called "thinking in objects." [1] Any idealistic argument that obscured this objective reference he disliked. It was this that caused the difference between Schiller and himself in their first intimate talk. He had been expounding with diagrams the typical form of a plant from which he held all actual forms were variations. Schiller, the Kantian, looked at the drawing and shook his head: "That is not an experience, it is an Idea." On which Goethe remarked that he "ought to be glad if he had ideas without knowing it, and even when he believed he saw them before his eyes." He meant that an "idea," if valid, must be reflected in experience; whereas most Kantians held that there was an unbridgeable gulf between them. After the friendship with Schiller Goethe uses the word "Idea" constantly, to denote "no mere figment of the brain," but a principle operative in Nature; for instance, that which causes the likenesses or the differences among the variations of a species. The discoveries of such harmonies in Science, he thought, was analogous to their creation in Art. And he would have been equally opposed to two modern doctrines, one that Science can only construct convenient formulas useful for calculation but irrelevant to reality; the other that Art derives from natural objects merely

[1] *Gegenständliches Denken.* In *Bedeutende Förderniss u.s.w.*, J.-A., vol. 39, p. 50. When Goethe late in life read Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, he was delighted to find the philosopher maintaining that a principle serving an immanent purpose could be recognised as operative in living organisms, and even more delighted to find Kant co-ordinating this activity in Nature with man's activity in Art. See *Einwirkung der neueren Philosophie*, J.-A , vol. 39, p. 31.

accidental suggestions for a creative work which, essentially, has nothing to do with them. Finally, in practical activity he found a kindred purpose. For if Science discovered relations already existing in Nature, and Art a beauty already adumbrated in objects, Action assisted the purpose of the Whole by the conduct that transformed life.

Thus he found an underlying unity in his own doings as administrator, scientist and artist; though, no doubt, in detail these interfered with one another. He wrote to Knebel of the "secret knot" which, however much he divided his life on the surface, bound all the parts together again, "social, moral and political";[1] while the pillars of the house of knowledge rose above them all. It is for this reason that his life may seem more important than anything he created. His works were like sparks flung from a wheel. They might grow cold and perish; but the wheel had done work, and the work is still fruitful.

The tenacity of Goethe's conviction about Nature could be illustrated from sayings and writings throughout his life. But it is nowhere better expressed than in the little rhapsody *On Nature* taken down from his talk by a friend during the early years at Weimar. It is Goethe the pantheist who speaks:

"Nature! We are surrounded by her, engulfed in her. . . . She creates fresh forms for ever; what is now, has never been before; what was, never comes back again—everything is new and yet still the old. . . . Each of her works has a being of its own, each manifestation is a unique conception, and yet they all make one. . . . Every moment she begins an unending race, and every moment she is at the goal. . . . She has neither speech

[1] 21st November 1782. Compare his letter to Schiller, 10th February 1798, where he says that he does not mind dividing his own nature, since it runs together again "like quicksilver."

nor language; but she creates hearts and voices and in them she feels and speaks. Love is her crown. Only through love does a man draw near to her. She has put gulfs between all creatures, and all creatures long to embrace. She has set all things apart, that she may bring all things together. One draught from the beaker of love she counts payment enough for a lifetime of toil. . . . To her the Present is Eternity. She is kind and gracious. I praise her and all her works. She is wise and calm. Man can tear no revelation from her by force, wring from her no gifts that she will not freely give. . . . She has brought me here; she will lead me out again. I trust myself to her. . . . She will not hate her work." [1]

This view of Nature, as will at once be observed and objected, ignores the Evil of which life is full. Of that Evil Goethe was well enough aware, as *Faust* plainly shows. But when he was thinking as a man of science he abstracted from it, as men of science naturally do. In this respect, as in others, he was a disciple of Spinoza, whom he frequently read for inspiration, and who says that the more "a brave man understands natural things" as they really are, and in their full connection, the better he will perceive that there is no place for fear or anger, and that he need only "do good and rejoice." This life, however, the philosopher adds, and Goethe endorses the saying, is "as arduous as it is rare." "Beginnings are easy," runs the learner's scrip in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*; [2] "the heights attract us, not the steps thereto.

[1] *Fragment über die Natur*, J.-A., vol. 39, *init.* See the notes there and the discussion about the authenticity. Goethe definitely accepted it years afterwards as giving his early views, and indeed his later, except for not placing enough stress on what he called *Steigerung* and *Polarität*, meaning progressive development on the one hand and the opposition-in-unity of subject and object on the other.

[2] Bk. 7 *ad fin.*

We look at the peaks while we linger in the plain." Goethe does not really ignore tragedy, but he overrides it; since it is, as he reads it, an element in an august quest.

Of that quest science is an essential part, and science means comprehension. Man cannot understand his own nature without the effort to understand natural things. Hence Goethe's mistrust of the famous maxim at Delphi, "Know thyself." He had always regarded it, he says, as "the device of a priestly guild who wanted to confuse men by demanding the unattainable and so lead them away from activity in the outer world to a false inward contemplation. Man knows himself only in so far as he knows the world; and he becomes acquainted with that only in himself and with himself only in it." [1]

Similarly we find him writing to Knebel, when exasperated by Jacobi's complaint that "Nature hid God"—("Not from everyone!" he flashed out elsewhere [2])—

"He who cannot get into his head the truth that Spirit and Matter, Soul and Body, Thought and Space, . . . were, are and will be the necessary twofold constituents of the universe, that both have equal rights, and therefore that both may be regarded as representative of God, he who cannot rise to the height of this thought, ought long ago to have given up thinking." [3] The influence of Spinoza is unmistakable here, and may perhaps be traced in the maxim: "There is an unknown orderly something in the object which corresponds to an unknown orderly something in the subject." [4] The belief in this correspondence was, to Goethe, the groundwork of religious hope. "Every real discovery," he wrote in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, "is the result

[1] J.-A., vol. 39, p. 49, from *Bedeutende Förderniss durch ein einziges geistreiches Wort* (1823).
[2] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 811.
[3] G. to Knebel, 8th April 1812.
[4] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 1344.

of an inborn feeling for truth. . . . It is a revelation which unfolds itself from the inner to the outer, and through it man may surmise his likeness to God. It is a union between the World and Mind, an assurance of the eternal harmony in all Being." [1] Accordingly, Goethe never ceased to protest against a doctrine current in his time, and perhaps still more in ours, that we can only know the "shell" of things while the "kernel" is inaccessible.

"You'd study Nature?" he wrote in the six short lines that he called his "manifesto" ("Epirrhema"):

> "Then remember
> The parts and the whole must be felt together.
> Nought is in and nought is out,
> For all within is all without.
> Hasten, man! Look up and see
> The holy open mystery." [2]

This belief, his deepest and most ineradicable, he reaffirmed in two poems of his old-age, "Anyhow," and "Ultimatum."

> " 'To Nature's heart,' "

says the Philistine,

> " 'No living soul can reach.'
>
> O Philistine,
> To me and mine
> What use in such a speech?
>
> We think, through every part
> We enter into her heart.
>
> Still the cry goes,
> 'Thrice happy he
> To whom she shows
> Even her outer shell.' "

---

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 562.

[2] J.-A., vol. 2, p. 249. Published in 1820. The date of composition is uncertain.

"For sixty years have I heard that cry;
I curse it, but secretly, silently,
Say to myself a thousand times,
Gladly she gives and she gives us all!
Nature is neither kernel nor shell,
She is both in one, she is one and all.

Look in your own heart, man, and tell
If you yourself are kernel or shell!" [1]

. . . . . .

"'At your old tricks!' you say,
'Mocking us so;
Nature has more in her
Than we fools know!'

Nay, you are all astray;
Mine is no mocker's part!
Is not the core of her
Set in man's heart?" [2]

On the other hand, Goethe, being a man of science and of common sense, as well as a poet and a mystic, was quite aware of the gulf between Humanity and Nature. The two had something in common or they could never come into contact, either by the way of thought or by the way of action. But also in each of them was something which was not to be found in the other. The opening scenes in the First Part of *Faust* and in the Second are full of this conviction. And Goethe expressed it more than once in the following paradoxical formula: [3]

"*a*. In Nature there is everything that there is in the Subject.

y. And something more.

b. In the subject there is everything that there is in Nature.

[1] "Allerdings," J.-A., vol. 2, p. 259. Published in 1820.

[2] "Ultimatum," J.-A. *ib*. The concluding lines.

[3] Most fully in a letter to Schlosser, 19th February 1815. Also in the sayings collected under the heading *Maximen u.s.w.* in J.-A., vol. 39, p. 114.

z. And something more.

b can know *a*, but *y* can only be surmised through *z*.

Thus arises the balance of the world and the circle of life into which we have been brought. That Being which holds these four elements together in perfect clarity has been called from all time, and by all nations, God."

Moreover, while the thoughts of men were only partially adequate to Nature, even in Nature herself the "idea" of any creature or any class was only imperfectly expressed. Complete expression would mean the epiphany of God, for all ideas interlock and all tend to Good. But for some reason that consummation is impeded. It is true that "every creature is only a note, a shade, in one huge symphony which we must study in the whole and in all its vastness, unless everything is to become a dead and meaningless letter.[1] It is true that "underneath the whole universe lies an idea according to which God in Nature and Nature in God can work and create for ever." But also, "we come to see that the philosopher may well be right who insists that Idea and Experience never correspond completely, if at the same time he will admit that they may be, indeed must be, analogous."[2] "No organism corresponds completely to the Idea that lies at its root: behind every one the higher Idea is hidden. That is my God, that is the God we all seek after and hope to find, but we can only feel him, we cannot see him."[3]

The final phrase is important. Goethe as a scientist

[1] To Knebel, 17th November 1784. Compare *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 375.

[2] *Bedenken und Ergebung*, J.-A., vol. 39, pp. 34-36. Published in 1820. The passage seems to point to the talk with Schiller nearly thirty years before.

[3] *Goethes Gespräche*, 7th May 1830.

is also a positivist. He does not, therefore, expect, here and now, to penetrate to ultimate truth. Yet, since he was also a poet, a philosopher and a religious man, the sense of the greater Whole was always present to him. A metaphor of which he was fond in his old-age and which occurs in the Second Part of *Faust* may illustrate his position. The Sun, that Absolute which is the ultimate truth and the cause of all other things, Man cannot look in the face. He can only watch it as reflected in and lighting up its creations. But these reflections, though fleeting and imperfect, cannot be separated from their source. It is the nature of the Absolute to show itself in this way,[1] and through the proper use of its appearance we can come nearer to It. Thus "in the true symbolism, the particular represents the universal, not as a dream or shadow, but as a living, momentary revelation of the Unfathomable.[2] And thus, if man lives the moment, as well as thinks it, in its right relation to everything else, he can lift Time into Eternity. Like Aristotle, Goethe thought our business was to make ourselves immortal, *ἀθανατίζειν ὅτι μάλιστα*, through the work of Reason, using all things, keeping their essence, letting their unessentials go:

"Nichts vom Vergänglichen,
Wie's auch geschah!
Uns zu verewigen,
Sind wir ja da!"[3]

"Waste not a word
On the things that must pass!
To grow immortal,
That's our task!"

For man on earth the condition of effort, never achieving

[1] "Die Idee ist das was immer zur Erscheinung kommt," *cp.* also *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 619.

[2] *Ibid.* 314.

[3] *Zahme Xenien.*

but always persisting, was for Goethe, as for everyone else, final. But the effort, he believed, was of a nature that implied attainment elsewhere. Anything that carried such an implication he called a "symbol" or "symbolic." He liked such words and adopted them constantly in his old-age. What Campanella said of Magic he repeats of Nature, "Natura infinita est, sed qui symbola animadverterit, omnia intelliget, licet non omnino." "Nature is infinite, but he who takes note of symbols will understand all things, although not altogether." [1]

Writing to a friend when he was nearly seventy,[2] he says in so many words: "Everything that happens is symbolic, and while it presents itself as complete, it hints at something beyond. In this thought, there lies, I believe, the greatest pride and the greatest humility. It is a claim that we share with the highest and the lowest."

These ideas underlie Goethe's whole treatment of the Faust-legend. Faust is consumed by the passion for satisfaction. But he cannot find it in the present life, and has lost interest in a life beyond. What he demands of Mephistopheles is an excitement that will make his dissatisfaction endurable. Satisfaction he despairs of finding in any moment such that he will "bid it stay." But this is what Mephistopheles undertakes that he shall find, meaning to cheat him into believing he can be content with the prolongation of sensual pleasure. He fails. For Faust's desire to "bid the moment stay" can only be assuaged when he can live it "in the light of eternity." This he can never do while he is in bondage to Mephistopheles, and he knows that he never will.

[1] From a *Zwischenrede* to *Einwirkung der neueren Philosophie*, J.-A., vol. 39, pp. 353, 354. Campanella wrote *Scientia haec*, meaning Magic. Goethe's view of Magic will be discussed later.

[2] To Schubarth, 2nd April 1818.

Further, the full consummation lies always beyond; beyond even life on earth, as the final chorus says:

"Alles Vergängliche
Ist nur ein Gleichniss."

"The things that must pass
Are only symbols."

We come here upon the dilemma which has perplexed so much philosophy and religion, and which Goethe made no pretence to solve. "Man's thought can only be called thought," he says in one of his epigrams, "when it is of something he can't think out." [1] He speaks sometimes as though the world were eternally perfect, sometimes as though it were imperfect but developing. Development implies evolution, and of that theory Goethe was one of the earliest protagonists. He never, indeed, reached a scientific theory of the process whereby evolution occurred. But we may be pretty sure, from the whole character of his thinking, that he would have preferred Lamarck's doctrine to Darwin's, or, at any rate, to Darwinism as expounded by the earlier Darwinians. For these, while making no attempt to explain the origin of variations, accounted for evolution by an external operation of the environment; while Lamarck assumed also, and pre-eminently, the effort of creatures to do new things. But Goethe, in his speculation, did not confine himself to biology. The whole universe was growing,[2]

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 939. "Dass man gerade nur denkt, wenn man das, worüber man denkt, nicht ausdenken kann!"

[2] *Das Werdende* as he calls it in *Faust*, 346. He would have included plants and stones in the one over-arching conception of growing "life." At the same time he felt the necessity of not blurring vital distinctions "in a comfortable fog." "He sees plainly enough," Goethe wrote of the scientific thinker, "that he has to unite all phenomena under one universal conception, the conception of Life in the broadest sense: but for that very reason he will take all the more care to mark the difference

and man an agent of its growth, alike in his action, his science and his art. The stress laid upon action is characteristic. Thus "doubt of any kind can only be removed by action;" [1] "only through action can theory and experience be reconciled," and without it "every solution is illusory." [2] "Man," he said once, "is the first speech that Nature holds with God." And he went on, "Nor do I doubt that in other planets this may go forward in other ways far higher, far deeper, and far more rational." [3]

We reach at this point beyond Goethe's knowledge to his belief. Modern science and logic eschew all belief, beyond what is demonstrable truth. Goethe developed his belief along with his science, permitting it to extend beyond knowledge, so long as it was analogous to knowledge. Thus he "believed" that Nature was not opaque to thought; he "believed" that human action contributed to her purposes; he "believed" that she was the vehicle of God, as he conceived Him; and lastly he "believed" that the soul survived death. Of this last belief, he would allow no one and nothing, he said, to deprive him. He thought it was suggested and justified by the processes of Nature as he had observed her. Thus, for example, the old and familiar analogy of the change from caterpillar to chrysalis and butterfly always appealed to him.

On the other hand, he did not care to talk about his

between things that live in different ways" (*Kristallisation und Vegetation*, J.-A., vol. 39, p. 11). Compare the way Goethe speaks of minerals in his *Vorträge über vergleichende Anatomie*, and the difference between them and organisms, "although we certainly should not deny to them their due share in the universal breath of life that moves through all Nature," J.-A., vol. 39, p. 172. Here, as elsewhere, Goethe was faithful to his ideal of the thinker "who has divided so deeply that he can unite and united so deeply that he can divide."

[1] *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Pt. 2, Bk. 5, c. 16.

[2] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 1231.

[3] *Goethes Gespräche*, 25th January 1813.

belief, nor to forecast the future in detail. Still less was he in sympathy with the concentration of thought on another world. "A sensible man who wants to be decent here and so has to struggle, fight and work leaves the future life in peace and is active and useful in this one." [1] That double outlook marks both the man himself and his poetry. Goethe closed no horizon, and from infinity there blew in upon him a fresh wind that kept him resolute and sane. If he felt the graves beneath him, he saw the stars above the world, and he told his brother-Masons, in the song he wrote for their ceremony and called "Symbolum," to listen for the voices of the Spirits and the Masters crying the command of hope from the heavenly spaces. It is one of the noblest of his lyrics, worthy, in the original, to be, as Carlyle called it, "the marching-music of mankind." [2]

"The Mason wanders
Like all who live,
And all the wonders
He strives to build
Are like man's striving.

The Future will waken
New joy, new grief.
We see but one step,
And that step brief,
Yet press through, unshaken.

Dark in the distance
There hangs a veil,
Solemnly. Silent,
The stars are above us,
Beneath us the graves.

Behold them, and ponder!
Strange visions will rise,
Changing, baffling
The bravest eyes,
Dread visions, grave-hearted.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 25th February 1824.
[2] At the end of his Rectorial Address to the students in Edinburgh.

But listen! The voices
Call from the sky,
The Spirits, the Masters,
Unceasingly:—
'Loiter not! Work!'

'Here are woven,
Here in the calm,
For all who labour
Full crowns of palm.
We say to you, Hope!'"

"Wir heissen euch hoffen." The song closes with that command, sharp and sudden as a thunder-peal.[1]

Let us return for a moment to the bearing of all this on *Faust*. Faust is, first and foremost, a seeker after knowledge and union with Nature. His despair at the opening of the play springs from his failure to achieve this; and that failure is due in part to the fact that he has shut out from his search love, beauty and action. He is the lonely student embittered by disillusion and emptiness. Mephistopheles prompts a new beginning which he intends shall end in Faust's damnation. But Faust begins to develop and to profit even by his crimes, till the devil becomes the unwilling agent of his redemption. Yet even when his life ends he is still imperfect and still unsatisfied. Goethe, however, does not leave him there. He is transported to another world where he meets the woman he loved and wronged, as Dante met Beatrice, and through her intercession he is pardoned. This leads us to the second strain in Faust, the desire for love and beauty. And there too Goethe's own experience was so important that we must devote a chapter to it.

[1] The simile is borrowed from Seeley's little book, *Goethe Reviewed after Sixty Years*. This was published in 1893 and is still one of the best things written about Goethe in English.

Goethe as a Young Man.

From a drawing, probably by himself.
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CHAPTER III

THE LABYRINTH OF LOVE

THERE are few men, even among the poets, to whom love was more important than it was to Goethe. In the course of his long life he experienced it in every form, from the crude lust of sex to the love of the Divine. Of this experience there is often abundant record, either in contemporary letters and poems or in his autobiography, and, while there may always be debate over certain details, we know enough to be sure that Goethe was neither a sensualist nor a saint. In this, as in all matters, his wisdom was temperance, not asceticism, and in his younger days he found temperance hard enough to practise. Moreover, his views changed and developed with time. For here, as everywhere, he believed in the teaching of experience, and in the freedom of the individual conscience. This belief pervades the whole of *Faust*. It is also the theme of *Wilhelm Meister*, which is the study of a man learning through trial and error, not only where his real vocation lies, but also "what it means to love with all his powers" and be true to his oath of fidelity. Some biographers have inferred from this attitude of Goethe's an irresponsibility that does not belong to his character. But in point of fact, Christiane Vulpius is the only woman, with any claim on him, who is known to have been his mistress, and the children she

bore him are the only ones known to have been his. And German research has been both merciless and meticulous. That he lived with Christiane many years before marrying her did not contradict his principles at the time. His ideal was faithfulness, but for long he disliked the taking of a public oath which the parties might not be able to keep.

Goethe's freedom, then, must not be identified with libertinism. On the contrary, he felt love as the active principle of the ideal tending at the last to the love of God. In this respect he may be compared with Dante. For in *Faust*, as in the *Divina Commedia*, the first love of early youth reappears as a spiritual deliverer. The fact that the two poems are in other ways so different, makes this point only the more significant: the element in love apprehended by both is the one missed alike by the ascetic and the rake. At the same time Goethe realised the dangers of the passion as vividly as Plato. "Love," he wrote to Frau v. Stein, "is at once the simplest thing in the world and the most capricious in that capricious medley which we call Man. . . . Like a star, the path of which we can trust as we trust the course of the sun, and like a meteor that deceives the watcher worse than any will-o-the-wisp." [1] Elsewhere he speaks of the errors of lust as wanderings in a labyrinthine path towards a goal greater and more complex than we could yet imagine. "So long as man strives, he will err." This saying of the Lord's in the Prologue to *Faust* might be a motto for Goethe's whole philosophy of tolerance. The goat-foot would be found in Paradise and the woman-creature with the head of a wife and the limbs of a harlot be raised to the highest heaven.[2]

In the story of his own life, his first love (whom he met

[1] Shortened from the letter dated 12th April 1782.

[2] *Paria.* Compare also *Der Gott und die Bajadere.*

when only a lad of fourteen) was a peasant girl called Gretchen; and the fact that he chose the name for the heroine of *Faust* is almost certainly significant. She came from a village inn near Frankfurt, and the scenery of the Gretchen-tragedy is that of his native town. His memories of her are given in his autobiography, *Poetry and Truth* (*Dichtung und Wahrheit*), and, to judge from that account, the Gretchen of *Faust* resembles this Gretchen of Frankfurt more than any other of the women he loved. Both have the same simplicity, spirit, zest for life and knowledge; both are exposed to the gallantries of the street and the influence of discreditable companions, both in their native refinement and goodness are far above their surroundings. Little points of detail are similar, such as the spinning at the window and the meeting at the church. The phrases they use have the same ring. "That is very pretty," says the Gretchen of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, when she reads a love-letter that Goethe had composed to take in another man, "it is a pity not to use it for a better purpose." Just so might the heroine of *Faust* have spoken. And in the Dedication which prefaces the drama, Goethe speaks of his earliest love coming back to his dreams.

This boyish feeling had, he tells us, the ideal character natural to first love. Looking back on it when over sixty he writes, "In a young heart that is not perverted the first movements towards love always take on a spiritual form. It seems as though Nature had willed that one sex should find in the other the visible manifestation of all goodness and beauty." [1] The episode "which was to leave a lasting impression" ended in tragi-comedy. The girl was found to be associated, though innocently, with a gang of forgers, and for a while Goethe was in an agony

[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Pt. 1, Bk. 5.

of fear about her fate. But he was also bitterly humiliated by her declaring before the magistrate that she had always regarded him as a mere boy.

Soon afterwards, when just sixteen, in September 1765, he went to the University of Leipsic. There for two years he was in love with Anna Katharina Schönkopf, the daughter of an acquaintance at whose house he took his mid-day meals. To the end of his life Goethe remembered Kätchen, but at the time he did little except torment himself and her, until the flirtation ended. Then by way of compensation, he "flung himself," to use his own phrase, "on his physical nature in order to spite his moral." "Every day," he wrote to a friend at the time, "I go down hill a little more. Three months, Behrisch, and it will all be over. Good night. I don't want to think of it."

There can be little doubt that memories of this period gave him additional material for the Gretchen-story. One of his own letters (to Behrisch, 7th November 1767) shows how easily he might himself have fallen into Faust's position; and here he uses phrases so close to lines in the first draft of the play that the likeness can hardly be accidental. He is describing his visits to a certain mock-prude:

"Often on Sundays she is alone in the house. Fourteen days' preparation and one such Sunday would drive out the propriety from the fortress. . . . If only I could do it unpunished. . . . I'd take over the devil's job and annihilate the good work. Do you recognise me in this tone, Behrisch? It's the tone of a conquering young lord. And that tone in me! Why, it's comic. But, without swearing, I'm already bold enough now for a girl's seduct—how the devil shall I put it into words?" [1]

[1] "Sie ist manchmal Sontags alleine zur Hause. *Vierzehn Tage Vorbereitung* und so ein Sontag sollten die Erberkeit von dem Schlosse

So in the drama Mephistopheles says it will take fourteen days even to approach Gretchen, and Faust swaggers in defiance:

"Had I but seven hours clear
I shouldn't need a devil here
For such a little girl's seduction."

To which Mephistopheles answers:

"You talk already like a Frenchman."

And comments (in the original draft):

"He acts as though he were a lord."

In the youthful poems, also, there are foreshadowings of motives used afterwards with tragic intensity in *Faust*. There is the lover imploring the god of sleep to close the mother's eyes and let him philander undisturbed with her daughter; there is the girl on the point of yielding against her conscience who appeals from her seducer to God.[1]

We have no reason, however, to conclude from these parallels that Goethe did himself seduce an innocent girl at Leipsic; there is no external evidence to that effect,

wegjagen. . . . Könnte ich's aber nur ungestraft tuhn . . . *so wür deich die affaire des Teufels übernehmen* und das gute Werck zu nichte machen. Kennst du mich in diesem Tone Behrisch ? *Es ist der Ton eines siegenden jungen Herrn.* Und der Ton und ich zusammen ! Es ist komisch. Aber ohne zu schwören *ich unterstehe mich schon ein Mädchen zu verf*— wie Teufel soll ich's nennen" (G. to Behrisch, 7th November 1767).

Then compare the original draft in the *Urfaust*:

Faust. *Hätt' ich nur sieben Stunden Ruh,*
Braucht keinen Teufel nicht dazu
So ein Geschöpfgen zu verführen.
Meph. *Ihr sprecht schon fast wie ein Franzos . . . .*
Er thut, als wär er ein Fürsten Sohn.

[1] *Das Buch Annette.*

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and it would be difficult to reconcile with remarks of his own both then and later. One early passage, it is true, might be taken as a confession. "Be on your guard against lust," he wrote to a friend the year after he went home; "a man's strength is like a woman's honour. Once a maidenhead goes to the devil, it's gone. You may patch up something, but it's never the same."[1] But, clearly, this need not imply personal guilt. And on the other hand, writing in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* of how he drew back later from marriage with Frederike Brion, so much less grave a matter, he speaks of this as the first time that he had been to blame in a love-affair. Moreover, when late in life he came once more into possession of his letters from Leipsic, and was so repelled by them as to destroy them, he wrote to an intimate friend in these terms:

"To see them again was anything but cheering. There before my eyes lay letters in my own hand showing only too plainly in what miserable pettinesses one had wasted the loveliest years of youth."[2] "Miserable pettinesses" is hardly the phrase in which the Goethe of that date, after writing *Faust*, would have described a seduction.

In the late summer of 1768, when he was just nineteen, Goethe had come home to Frankfurt, and he lay there broken in health for many months. At this time he made friends with his mother's friend, the saintly and spirited Susanna von Klettenberg, whose portrait he drew years afterwards in the "Beautiful Soul" of *Wilhelm Meister*. Her influence has been traced in the regret his letters now show for the dissipation at Leipsic and in

[1] To Breitkopf, 1769.

[2] To Marianne v. Willemer, 3rd January 1828. "Blätter welche nur allzudeutlich ausdrückten, in welchen sittlich kümmerlichen Beschränktheiten man die schönsten jugendjahre verletzt hatte."

the religious colour of his speculations.) It was now that he experimented in alchemy, half hoping for a short way into the secret of the universe, read Paracelsus and other mystics, and worked out for himself that theory of Evil as a necessary stimulus to Good that he was to embody in his Mephistopheles. Passages in his letters show an impatience of traditional pedantry that again recalls *Faust*. "A great scholar," he writes (13th February 1769), "is seldom a great philosopher; he who has toiled through many books despises the plain and easy book of Nature, and yet nothing is true but what is simple." Again (8th April), "I know what I have experienced, and I consider experience the only real knowledge." This impatience, however, did not mean any lessening in his eagerness for genuine science and learning, and the two-fold attitude towards knowledge is equally typical of *Faust*. He was planning to take up academic studies once more, and in the spring of 1770 he went to Strasburg, there to work at both law and medicine.

All these indications, taken together, suggest that the old poet's memory was not at fault when he pointed to the year 1769 as the year when the conception of *Faust* first came to him. The puppet-play on the theme had been loved by him from childhood and the old story "rang and sang" in the young man's head. And it is worth noting that in Spies' version, as in Marlowe's, the twofold aspect of love is recognised at the beginning: marriage is a holy state and it is the devil who diverts Faust's longing for it to lust. None of the poem, however, it may safely be assumed, was actually written until 1773, after the success of his first serious drama, the chronicle-play, *Götz von Berlichingen*. This is the date he indicated himself for the earliest writing when

he took up *Faust* again in Italy,[1] and he tells us in the Autobiography that his habit at first had been to carry the subject in his head and enjoy his favourite situations "without writing anything down." [2] But when the writing did begin it must have gone at an astonishing pace, for in 1775 he took with him to Weimar the early draft of the First Part known as the *Urfaust*, a draft he had later only to expand and to polish.

In fact his activity during this period between Strasburg and Weimar (1770–1775) was incessant, alike as student, writer and lawyer; and equally incessant, it must be admitted, were his love-affairs, often closely connected with his writings. He has told us himself in his Autobiography, vividly and at length, of the changes in his feeling for the pastor's daughter, Frederike Brion, and of the suffering that his fickleness caused. Frederike never blamed him and, years later, she and her parents welcomed him affectionately. But he blamed himself: his remorse was, he says, "for a time intolerable." This self-reproach may have influenced his broodings over *Faust*; but at the same time he appears to have been absorbed in the drama of *Götz*, and it is hard to discover any real likeness between Gretchen and Frederike beyond the fact that both are presented to us as young, charming and good. Goethe himself points, not to any characters in *Faust*, but to the virtuous Maries in *Götz* and *Clavigo* and their vacillating lovers as monuments of his personal remorse.[3]

[1] *Ital. Reise*, 1st March 1788. "Naturlich ist es ein andrer Ding, das Stück jetzt oder vor fünfzehn Jahre ausschreiben."

[2] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Pt. 2, Bk. 10.

[3] *Ibid.*, Pt. 3, Bk. 12. For the happy meeting with Frederike and her parents see his letter to Frau von Stein, 25th September 1779. The vague scandal about Frederike's later life and her supposed intrigue with a priest never rested on any better evidence than the hearsay account

Closer to the temper of the drama appears the impression left on him by the struggle with his hopeless passion for Charlotte Buff, the original of the Lotte in *The Sorrows of Werther*. "My *Faust* took shape with my *Werther*," he said to Eckermann, and the two works have much in common. Not that Lotte Buff resembles Gretchen, though she may have suggested one or two traits, such as the motherliness with children and the feeling for religion. But the dominant note in the temper of Werther, of Faust, and of Goethe himself at this time, is the longing for something supremely desirable which is and must be withheld. Goethe always declared that there was a great deal of himself in Werther, though here again it would be absurd to identify his own character with that of his creation. His own case brought tragedy to no one, since he resisted his passion for the real Lotte, already engaged to his friend Kestner, and remained on the best of terms with both. "Goethe acted much more honourably," Kestner wrote when the novel was published, "than he described himself as doing in *Werther*."

The whole correspondence, indeed, between Goethe and Kestner shows that *Werther*, like many other productions of his art, owed quite as much to his self-control as to his susceptibility. Letters were frequent between the two young men and there is a draft in Kestner's handwriting, probably intended for another

repeated by Näke at the end of his *Wallfahrt nach Sesenheim*. It is now discredited, but critics and biographers still suppose that Goethe saw the passage and did not contradict it. There is no reason, however, to believe that he ever did see it. It is true that Näke sent him the account of his "pilgrimage" to the old parsonage (years after Frederike's death), but he sent it *in manuscript* and there is nothing to suggest that the manuscript contained any reference to such a scandal. The gossip appears in the book itself like an afterthought, when the description of the visit to Sesenheim is over and done with.

friend, which shows also how freely Goethe had spoken to him about his religious views and how closely they resembled those implied in *Faust*. Faust's confession of faith in the garden-scene is almost paraphrased by Kestner's prose account of Goethe's own position:

"He is not what could be called orthodox. Still, this is not due to pride or caprice or any kind of assumption. And he will only express his opinions on vital matters to a chosen few: he is unwilling to disturb the peace and faith of others. There is no doubt he hates scepticism and is striving after truth. . . . He does not go to church, not even to the Lord's Supper, and seldom prays. . . . For Christianity he has deep reverence, but not in the form presented by our theologians. He believes in a future life, a happier state. He strives after truth, but attaches more importance to the feeling of it than to its demonstration."

Nevertheless, Goethe at this time, like Faust and like Werther, himself meditated suicide. He cleared himself of that obsession, according to what became his constant practice, by dramatising it. And already in the second edition of *Werther* he prefixed a warning to his readers against imitating his hero.

"Every young man longs to love as he did,
Every maid to be so loved as she.
Ah, the holiest of all our longings,
Why must it well forth with agony?

Dear young heart, you love him, mourn his sorrows,
Weep for him, defend his memory—
See, his pale ghost signals from the shadows:
'Play the man, and never follow me!'"

But though Goethe mastered this tendency to despair so completely that many readers think he never knew it, it lay always for him not very far below the surface.

Writing to his friend Zelter when over sixty,[1] a noble letter of sympathy about the suicide of Zelter's stepson, he said:

"Once life-weariness has got hold of a man, we can only pity him, not blame him. *Werther* ought to leave no doubt that I myself had known what it was to be shaken through and through by the onslaught of this disease, so natural and so unnatural. I know well what effort and resolution it cost me to escape the waters of death that time, just as I have had to save myself since with labour and difficulty from many another shipwreck."

Eleven years later, after such another storm, he imagined himself meeting the phantom of the young man Jerusalem whose story had suggested points for Werther, and speaking to him of the morning when they were both young,

> "when I was bid to stay
> And you to leave us, where our pathways crossed.
> Well, you went first, and little have you lost." [2]

This exasperation with life found its first outlet through literature in *Werther* and in *Faust*, while it recurs constantly in the letters to Kestner, intermingled with the sense of something blissful just out of reach, so characteristic of Faust's opening soliloquies. Thus he writes to his friend on the news of his marriage with Lotte Buff, "I wander in the desert where no water is; my hair is my shadow and my blood my wellspring. Though it gives me joy to know that your ship is first in harbour with flags flying and crew cheering" (April 1773).

Again, like Faust perishing in sight of the heavenly powers ascending and descending with their golden pitchers, he cries:

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[1] 3rd November 1812.

[2] From the poem "An Werther," in the *Trilogie der Leidenschaft.*

"Grant me your cup, ye blessed Muses, give me the golden draught, the elixir of life, for I faint and die!"

The actual writing of *Werther* was precipitated by another emotional crisis, the attraction of a young married woman, Maximiliane Brentano. Here again he resisted and saved himself by flight. "Dear Mama," he wrote to the bride's mother, Frau von la Roche, "if you knew what went on in me before I decided to avoid the house, you would not try to lure me back again." "Believe me, the sacrifice I make to your Max in not seeing her is worth more than the attentions of the most ardent lover."

A few months later, he fell in love with Lili Schönemann, and for a while was actually engaged to her. Years afterwards he recorded that he had never been so near married happiness as then. But at the time he hesitated and the engagement lapsed. Apparently he was not sure enough of himself to face the check on his freedom that marriage would involve. When he went away to Switzerland in order to break the spell, he describes himself as "the bear that has broken loose, the cat that has escaped." He was aware of his own instability and tormented by it. This is plain from his letters to an unknown friend, the Countess Stolberg, whom he never saw and whom he treated as a kind of confessor. "Will the day ever come," he exclaims, "for my heart to feel the grip of real joy and sorrow and know the blessedness granted to man, and not be tossed for ever on the mad waves of my senses and imagination, up to heaven and down to hell?" Or again, "If only I could tell you my relation to more than one dear and noble woman's heart! If only I could tell you, face to face! No, if I could, I dared not. You would not endure it. Nor I myself, if everything rushed on us at once

and if Nature in her daily ordinances did not suffer us to swallow a few grains of forgetfulness."

Such preoccupation with love and the mingling of acumen and bewilderment that it shows are reflected, at one end of the scale, by the Gretchen-tragedy and the remarkable close of the fragmentary drama *Prometheus*, at the other by the sentimental *Clavigo* and the original version of *Stella* where his early speculations on marriage run to their wildest. *Stella* is the story of one man and two women, where the women are unselfish and finely tempered—Stella herself is thought to have much of Lili—while the man is at the mercy of his changing susceptibility. In this first form the play ends by the wife offering "half" of the husband to the mistress. In a later version Goethe, who had come to condemn inconstancy more sternly, made the man shoot himself. But at the time he appears to have been satisfied with the "happier" ending. And this, by the way, is one among many instances which show that Goethe's sense of what is tragic in life by no means lessened as he grew older. What was characteristic both then and later was his way of dealing with weaknesses to which he felt himself liable by embodying their essence, as sharply as he could, in a work of art. "I am tired," he wrote to a friend,[1] "of moaning over the fate that befalls our sort of men, but I will draw them; they shall learn to know themselves, if possible, as I have known them, and become, if not more at rest, at least stronger in their unrest."

From much of this tumult he was delivered by an invitation from Karl August, the young Duke of Weimar,[2] to help him in the government of his little Duchy.

[1] Johanna Fahlmer.

[2] Later, after the Napoleonic wars, the Grand-Duke.

He welcomed the chance of escaping from the narrowness of Frankfurt life and of taking his part in public work. For the next eleven years, from 1775 to 1786, he was strenuously engaged in administration, and at the same time held by the deepest of his passions. From their first meeting he was drawn to Charlotte von Stein, a married woman and mother of children, seven years older than himself. She helped him to the concentration and self-control that he desired and that his new life demanded. Year by year their relation grew closer, till in 1781 Charlotte admitted that she loved him and entrusted to his care her youngest son, Fritz (born before she knew him). Not unnaturally, the inference has been drawn that she became his mistress. But there is no evidence of this, it was never believed by their circle at Weimar, and many people will think that a passage in a letter written to her from Italy is conclusive to the contrary. It runs as follows:

"Ah, dear Lotte, you do not know what constraint I have put and do put upon myself, and how at bottom the thought that I do not possess you, take it as I may and turn it as I will, does exasperate and tear me to pieces. Put my love for you into what shape I can, still always, always—Forgive me for uttering once more what has lain so long silent between us." (21st February 1787.)

Goethe's letters to Frau von Stein have all been preserved, and no one who reads them will have any doubt of his ardour. But in this case the ideal element was dominant. He prayed Charlotte to "finish her work, and make him really good." He confessed that when she left him his virtue went with her. Years later he acknowledged that she and Shakespeare together had made a man of him for the two worlds of life and poetry by inspiring him with that singleness of devotion which

creates inner harmony, "the fairest of all good things," as he calls it in *Wilhelm Meister*:

"Live for one, one woman only,
Honour one, one master only,—
Soul and sense are unified.
Lida! Joy of joys beside me!
William! Star of stars beyond me!
Unto you I owe my all.
Day and year have sunk and vanished,
Still there rests upon those hours
All the worth I ever won." [1]

In 1779 he had written to her in the same spirit, "If I come on earth again, I will pray the gods that I may love but once, and if you were not such an enemy of this world, I would pray for you to be this beloved companion." The veerings of the husband in *Stella* drop from the lover of *Lida*. She was right, he said, to claim that the only man she could love must be entirely hers:

"And yours he is, yours only,
For since we parted
The rush and clamour of all this hurrying life
Seems but a thin-spun mist

---

1 "*Zwischen beiden Welten.*

Einer Einzigen angehören,
Einen Einzigen verehren,
Wie vereint es Herz und Sinn!
Lida! Glück der nächsten Nähe,
William! Stern der schönsten Höhe,
Euch verdank ich, was ich bin.
Tag und Jahre sind verschwunden
Und doch ruht auf jenen Stunden
Meines Wertes Vollgewinn."

The lines were published in 1820, and internal evidence points to their having all been written at that period. Certain critics have thought that the first six lines must be much earlier, just because of the ardour in them. But no deep love of Goethe's could really die, and the turn of the phrase "der nächsten Nähe" with its trick of pleonasm is an almost certain indication of an advanced date. "Nächste Nähe,"="nearest neighbourhood," seems never to occur before 1810.

Through which your face
Shines down on me, friendly and faithful,
As the eternal stars
Through the leaping rays of the Northern Lights
Shine on for ever." [1]

It should be noted that in this decade, and in spite of preoccupation with administrative work, some of his best works were planned though they could not be completed. The First Part of *Faust*, indeed, he laid aside, largely, no doubt, because the stormy atmosphere of it was no longer congenial to his mood. He turned to subjects nearer to his present situation and his dreams: to ideas for the Second Part where Faust was to meet the classic Helen; to the drama of *Iphigenia in Tauris*, where the bewildered Orestes is healed by a sister older and wiser than himself, a sister who has the courage to love the truth and speak it; to the struggle of Tasso, the spring of whose poetry was adoration for a woman he could not possess; to *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, where men learn in ordinary avocations what self-development means. This was also the time for several of his loveliest lyrics, often written directly to Charlotte. If the total output was small, it certainly was of the highest quality.

It is clear that his feeling for her during these years was the great inspiration of his life. But also for a man of his temperament it meant a terrible strain, and this increased until it became unendurable. He had that in him, he said once, that might well have destroyed himself and everyone else.[2] Passages such as this from the letters written just after her admission of her love are sufficiently illuminating:

"My spirit grows feeble and takes no joy in anything,

[1] "An Lida."
[2] To Eckermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, 21st March 1830.

sometimes anxiety gets the upper hand, sometimes cowardice, an evil genius makes the worst use of my absence from you, shows me the worst side of the position, and bids me seek safety in flight; and then again I feel that one glance, one word from you will drive away all this fog" (8th July 1781).

Often it seemed to do so. As late as 1784 he wrote in the unfinished poem he called "The Secrets":

> "For all that men within their earth-bound limits
> Learn of high bliss and call by holy names,
> The harmony of faithfulness, of friendship
> That cannot falter and need fear no doubt,
> The light that only in their loneliest thoughts
> Burns for the wise, for poets in their dreams,
> Their heavenliest,—I, too, in my best hours
> Found it in her and found it there for me." [1]

But the tension between soul and body was growing too great. In the same year he writes to her, "Earnestly, dear Lotte, I would implore you, do not by your sweet behaviour increase every day my love for you. . . . Dear Lotte, when I go to Eisenach, let me go in a quieter mood. If only the month of May could be for me the month of peace!" Even when he exults in his love he speaks of it now as a disease, "Non, mon amour pour toi n'est plus une passion, c'est une maladie, une maladie qui m'est plus chère que la santé la plus parfaite, et dont je ne veux plus guérir" (30th August 1784).

He seems at one time to have hoped for a divorce between Frau von Stein and her husband as a possible way out. For in the late summer of 1786, when he was on the point of leaving for Italy, he wrote, "Till now I have borne much in silence, and I have desired nothing more strongly than that our relation should become such

[1] Published separately in his poems under the title of "Für Ewig."

that no power could interfere with it. Otherwise I cannot live near you, I would rather go into the wilderness of the world, whither I am going now. . . ." (1st September 1786).

Frau von Stein must have rejected the solution of divorce (although divorce was easy at Weimar) perhaps because it would have cut her off from her sons. The situation remained as difficult as ever, and this letter was a farewell: Goethe could bear it no longer. Abruptly he left Germany for Italy and was away nearly two years. Nine months after this sudden and secret departure, he wrote to her in one of his letters, "I am myself again and therefore only the more thine. I would choose death rather than the life of the last years and even in absence I am more to you now than I was then" (8th June 1787). Still more significantly, in a letter two months before (18th April), "Farewell, most dearly beloved, my heart is with you, and now that distance and absence have swept away all that in our last days lay silent between us, once again the fair flame of love, of loyalty, of remembrance, burns and shines joyfully in my heart."

On his return from Italy this letter was given back to him, and when he was an old man he sent it to his friend Zelter,[1] saying that it came "at the turning-point of the whole adventure and threw a glimmering light on what had been and what was to be." It marked the end of a chapter.

But his flight to Italy was prompted not only by the need to escape from an impossible situation; there was also his own longing to see the great centre of art and beauty and classical memories. He had dreamt of this for years. Mignon's song "Kennst du das Land" was

[1] 16th February 1818.

written before he went. And on his arrival he wrote:—"For many a long year I could not bear to look at a Latin author or cast my eyes on anything that might awaken the thought of Italy. If I did so by accident, I suffered torture. . . . Had I not made the resolve which I am now carrying out, I should have been lost—so intense was the desire to see these things with my own eyes" (*Ital. Reise*, 12th October 1786).

His experience in Italy was to him a new birth. And his activity was astounding. Only a German, perhaps, who was also a man of genius could have followed so many interests at once, with such industry and often with such insight. He was as eager for botany, anatomy and geology as he was for archæology; and he studied archæology because of its connection with painting, sculpture and architecture; for he believed at this time that in Art the ancients and the men of the Renaissance possessed the true principles, lost to the Middle Ages and the modern. In Rome he worked hard himself at drawing and modelling, and in Padua and Palermo he developed some of his best ideas about the evolution of plants. Finally, he flung himself once more into poetry, where now at last he came to recognise his greatest gift. Had it not been for Italy, his output as a writer might have been hampered to the end by administrative routine at Weimar. His letter from Naples to the Duke (27th–29th May 1787) asking for freer conditions with more leisure for literature, should be compared with an earlier letter to Frau von Stein (1st January 1781) where he speaks of his "little stream of poetry" being swallowed up in "the sand" of official life. In Italy he rewrote his *Iphigenie* in verse, completed *Egmont* (planned before he went to Weimar), and did much both for *Tasso* and for *Faust*, while fresh matter for *Wilhelm Meister* crowded

into his head. In *Faust* itself, it would appear, the only new scenes that he actually finished were two for the First Part, the "Witch's Cauldron" and the scene called "Forest and Cavern"; but many ideas for the Second Part may be traced to this period, and in particular the fuller conception of a harmony inspired by health and beauty. "I certainly thought," he writes, "that I had something to learn here, but that I should have to take so low a place in the school, that I must forget so much that I had learnt, or rather unlearn so much—I had no idea of that." "The moral sense," he continues, "as well as the artistic, is undergoing a great change" (20th December 1786).

In after years Goethe looked back to the time in Italy as the happiest he ever knew. But it would be a mistake to think of his satisfaction as without alloy. The "natural life" developed drawbacks of its own. During the first year the new and intoxicating visions of Art, Science and Nature had kept him free from passion. In September 1787 he wrote to the Duke that, since he left he had lived in seclusion and, whether he "ought to be praised for it or blamed," women had had no part in his life.[1] But by the following February (his last in Rome), he writes of "pleasant walks" in the "sweet flower-gardens," and the context leaves no doubt that he means the Gardens of Armida.[2] The details of these experiences are quite obscure, but the tone of them is clear from certain of the "Roman Elegies," perhaps the

[1] "Noch halte ich mich immer in der Stille und sogar (ich weisz nicht, ob es lobens oder scheltenswerth ist) die Frauen haben keinen Theil an mir" (28th September 1787).

[2] "Wie ich solches in meinem Leben mehr als einmal erfahren, dagegen auch die Unbequemlichkeit gespürt habe wenn ich mich von dem breiten Wege, auf dem engen Pfade der Enthaltsamkeit und Sicherheit einleiten wollte" (16th February 1788).

most pagan verses in all modern literature.[1] And the transition from the earlier mood is marked by another poem belonging to the January of that year, the lines beginning "Cupido, loser, eigensinniger Knabe," though, as he pointed out himself, they can, like most poetry, be given a wider reference:

"O Cupid, wanton, obstinate, wilful boy,
You asked me shelter for an hour or two,
How many days and nights now have you lingered
Till you are lord and master in the house?

Out of my spacious lodging am I driven
To lie on the bare ground at night and grieve,
While you stir flame on flame upon my hearth,
Squandering my store, scorching your hapless host.

You take my gear and turn it at your pleasure;
I search and find not, like one blind and lost.
So wild your ways, my soul must quit her dwelling,
Seeking escape, and leave the house to you." [2]

Characteristically, however, he was dissatisfied with these adventures, if not disgusted. "As for the heart," he wrote to the Duke, "in this country that does not come into Love's calendar at all." And again, "In a foreign country, I perceive, the heart grows cold and shameless, because there is so little room for love and trust." Finally, "I have grown horribly wild," and the comment, "Well, I've never been much good all my life." [3] The

[1] It should, perhaps, be added that this does not apply to all the "Römische Elegien" without qualification. Many of them, it is known, were written later for Christiane, and some of these show a "romantic" tenderness colouring the "classic" form, *e.g.* No. 3 and No. 20. The references in this last to a "lovely secret," "schönes Geheimniss," should be connected with the letter to Frau von Stein, undated but clearly belonging either to the end of 1788 or the beginning of 1789, in which he speaks of telling her more "von den schönen Geheimnissen."

[2] *Ital. Reise*, January 1788.

[3] To Karl August, 29th December 1787, 25th January 1788, 23rd May 1788. (The last letter was written on the way home.)

words "cold and shameless" are the epithets applied to Mephistopheles in the scene called "Forest and Cavern" where Faust complains that the Earth-spirit had indeed given him the realm of nature to delight in, but also the comrade (Mephistopheles) who lowers him in his own eyes. And all through the scene of the "Witch's Cauldron," composed, as we know, in the Borghese Gardens,[1] the power of sex is presented in its coarsest and most repellent form.

Still, it was with the utmost reluctance that Goethe tore himself away from Italy. He was drawn back to the uncongenial north, by his sense of duty and his feeling for his friends, in particular for Frau von Stein. During all the months he had been in Italy he had written to her constantly, and clearly he hoped to renew the companionship on the ideal plane and in a cooler atmosphere. But this proved to be impossible. For one thing he found her unsympathetic and uncomprehending when he wished to pour out to her what he had learnt in Italy. For another, he now felt himself free to form a new tie, and he took the young Christiane Vulpius for his mistress. This was soon after his return, in the summer of 1788.[2] Frau von Stein could not forgive him and even satirised him grossly, under the name Ogon, in her play *Dido*. Goethe never retaliated, nor spoke anything but good of her; and when, seven years later, she relented, they renewed a friendship which lasted till her death (in 1827). Something of what he felt at the breach may be gathered from two epigrams which seem to belong here:

"Eine Liebe hatt' ich, sie war mir lieber als alles,
Aber ich hab' sie nicht mehr! Schweig', und ertrag den Verlust!"

[1] Probably during the previous summer. See Appendix.
[2] See Note 3 on next page.

"A love I had, dearer than all the world,
Lost to me now! Be silent! Bear the loss." [1]

"Ja, ich liebte dich einst, und wie ich keine noch liebte,
Aber wir fanden uns nicht, finden uns ewig nicht mehr."

"Yes, I loved you once, as I had not known I could love.
But we lost the way home to each other: we never shall find
it again." [2]

It is entirely to Goethe's honour that once he had taken Christiane he would not desert her. If he did not marry her till 1806, he treated the relation as a marriage; he wrote of it to Schiller in 1796 as an "Ehestand" of eight years' standing, and as early as 1790, in answer to a friend who urged him to marry, he replied, "But I am married, only without the ceremony." [3] Their union certainly was not perfect. She had no comprehension of his intellectual interests, and for long he had misgivings about her fidelity,[4] but she was genuinely loyal, while she brought him the happiness of children [5] and

[1] No. 7 from the epigrams in the series "Venice, 1790." Some critics have taken the "love" to mean his love for Italy which, so he admitted in a letter to the Duke, had received "a mortal blow" on this journey. But surely no German poet, unless he meant a woman, would use a form of words involving "sie" in such a context (=lit.: "She was dearer to me than all, but I have her no longer!"). Besides, why should Goethe keep silence about the loss of his love for Italy? It would only have pleased his friends if he had expressed it more.

[2] This epigram appears among Schiller's works. But Schöll has given good reason for holding that it is by Goethe. See the Notes in his edition of *Goethe's Letters to Charlotte von Stein*, vol. ii.

[3] *Goethes Gespräche*, 30th July 1790. The letter to Schiller is dated 13th July 1796. From this and from a letter of Goethe's to Christiane herself on 3rd July 1810, speaking of the twelfth as an anniversary sacred to them both, it seems clear that the 12th July 1788 was the day of their union. He had returned to Weimar on 18th June.

[4] See, for example, his letter to her, 23rd–26th September 1797.

[5] All except August, however, died in infancy. Goethe felt their loss keenly, and traces of this feeling may be found in the lines about the Blessed Children at the close of *Faust*.

the relief that comes from the natural satisfaction of the senses. There are three epigrams written about this time that indicate the complexity of his feelings. The second (in the published order) points plainly to Christiane:

"Know you the glorious gift of love that has found its fulfilment,
Binding our bodies in beauty, setting our spirits at rest?"

The couplet which precedes it points as plainly to Charlotte von Stein:

"Know you the glorious poison of love that finds no fulfilment,
Burning and bringing fresh life, devouring, renewing a man?"

And the couplet that follows praises an ideal of absolute constancy beyond his own reach, the true love that is

"the same for ever and ever,
The same if all things are granted, the same if all are withheld." [1]

Meanwhile, none of his friends, except his mother, seem to have understood the claim that Christiane had on him. Schiller wanted him to break the connection, on the ground that it was hampering his production. And certainly the lack of spiritual sympathy appears to have checked his poetic powers during the six years from 1788 to 1794, when the friendship with Schiller himself began. There is scarcely any new poetry of the first rank in this period, unless we include what he may have done at the *Fragment* of *Faust* (see below). But if Goethe had acted as Schiller wished and discarded Christiane, it is hard to believe that he, whose imagination was always rooted in the concrete and who claimed with reason that he had "never shammed" in his poetry,

[1] From the series called "Summer" in "Four Seasons" ("Vier Jahreszeiten").

could have revived in himself the sympathy needed to complete *Faust* where the Gretchen-tragedy is essential.)

Goethe's own answer to Schiller is plain in the poem "Amyntas," written in the autumn of 1797. He had noticed an apple-tree strangled by ivy and compared it to himself as Schiller saw him, strangling in Christiane's embrace. Amyntas, in the elegy, is ready to admit everything: he says to himself all that his friend the physician could say about the lack of fruit and its cause. But to cut down the ivy? No, for the tree itself cries out:

"O, destroy me not!
Tearing the ivy away, you tear the life from your friend.
Have I not wooed her myself, and drawn her tenderly towards me?
Are not her leaves and her limbs as near to me as my own?
How can I fail to love her, who clings to me, needs me only,
Silently cleaves to my side, strong with the strength of desire?"

What if she does suck from him health and wealth and the strength to bear fruit? Everything is worth giving for love:

"Sweet is it ever to squander and here let me squander most sweetly!
He who has trusted to love, how can he haggle for life?"

With this should be read a letter of his to Christiane herself in the same autumn. He was in Switzerland and had thought of escaping once more to Italy, but she wrote imploring him not to go so far away. On this he decided to return, "I can certainly say it is only for your sake and the little man's that I am coming back. You are the only ones who really need me; the rest of the world can get on without me" (30th October 1797).

Even if we admit a strain of egoism in Goethe, this letter may show how far he was from the egoist of

ill-informed fancy who sacrificed women to his art. And the same might be said of the poem he wrote in 1813 for their "silver-wedding," the poem he called "Found,"[1] and in which he looked back to their first meeting:

"I walked in the wood
With a careless mind:
There was nothing I thought of
To seek or find.

A little flower
I spied in the shade,
Fair as a star,
Or the eyes of a maid.

I stooped to pluck it,
I heard it say,
'Must I be broken
To wither away?'

Then I lifted the roots
Right carefully,
To my garden-house
I brought it with me.

I set it to grow
In a sheltered plot,
And now it blossoms
And withers not."

Early in 1798, a few months after he had written "Amyntas," still encouraged by Schiller, who had long been urging it, he took up *Faust* again in earnest. A *Fragment* had been published in 1790, containing the bulk of the *Urfaust*, revised, but omitting the part of Gretchen's brother Valentine and breaking off before the Prison-scene. On the other hand, it contained the two "Italian" scenes, namely the Witch's Cauldron and the Forest-scene, and also the end of the talk between

[1] "Gefunden." See the notes *ad loc.* in J.-A., vol. 1. The gentle-heartedness in the idyll of *Hermann und Dorothea* (1796–1797) points in the same direction.

Faust and Mephistopheles *after* the compact between them (which was still only presupposed, not described), and finally Mephistopheles' triumphant outburst when alone (ll. 1770–1869). Now, (that is, within the three years from 1798 to 1801,) Goethe appears to have completed the whole of the First Part, adding as much again as was in the *Fragment* and rewriting in verse the Prison-scene. And probably in the spring of 1798 he also composed Faust's last struggle with despair in Part II. This, like much now composed for Part I, seems to reflect his own determination to cure by work his own restlessness. In 1800 he began what he called the *Helena*, also destined for Part II, but to judge from a remark of Schiller's he was not calm enough to continue it.[1] The Dedication had already been written in the June of 1797, and it shows with what memories he returned to the work:

"Once more you hover near me, floating phantoms,
That came of old to young bewildered eyes.
Dare I attempt to keep you now in earnest?
Turns my heart still to those dream-fantasies?
You crowd on me! So be it! Use your power,
Gathering about me from the vaporous skies:
Once more my breast, as in my youth, is shaken
By the strange magic that your wings awaken.

You bring glad days with you and their sweet visions,
Till many a Shadow whom I loved draws near.
Like an old, tender, half-forgotten ballad,
Echoes of friendship and first love I hear.
Sorrow revives, repeated ring the wailings
Over life's labyrinth in the days that were,
Naming the dear ones who, in bright hours banished,
Cheated of joy, before me dropped and vanished.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, September-October 1800. He stopped apparently at line 8802 where the disguised Mephistopheles meets Helen and the chorus, outside the palace of Menelaus at Sparta. For evidence about the details, see Appendix. Part I, complete, was published in 1808.

They cannot hear the melodies I sing now,
The souls for whom I sang my morning song.
The first response long since has fallen silent,
And turned to dust the first, the friendly throng.
Music I make for multitudes I know not,
Even their praise seems to my sense a wrong.
Those who once held my poems in their heart,
If they live yet, live in the world apart.

And long-forgotten yearning overpowers me
For that calm solemn spirit-world of death;
My music whispers vague mysterious murmurs,
Like an Aeolian harp at the wind's breath.
I tremble suddenly and tears are falling,
Tear after tear; the strong heart softeneth.
What I possess fades far away from me,
And what I lost becomes Reality."

Those years at the turn of the century, when Goethe himself was more than middle-aged, were among the most fruitful of his life. But in the spring of 1805 Schiller died. "I have lost," wrote Goethe to Zelter,[1] "the half of my being." On the day of Schiller's death no one had dared to tell him the truth, but he guessed it, and at night he was heard sobbing in his room.[2]

After Schiller's death, and for many years, nothing more worth mentioning was done to the Second Part. In 1806—the year of Jena, when Weimar was occupied by the French—Goethe married Christiane, who had shown sense and courage during the crisis, and he spoke of it as a step that he had long had in mind. The year after, however, we find him almost swept away by a sudden passion for a young girl, Minna Herzlieb. He controlled it and said nothing of his feelings to the girl; only later he told his wife and Zelter that he "had loved her more than he should."[3] Experience and sympathy had

[1] 1st June 1805.
[2] *Goethes Gespräche.* Voss. May 1805.
[3] To Christiane, 6th November 1812. To Zelter, 15th January 1813.

modified his view of marriage, and his stricter attitude is expressed in the novel, *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (*Elective Affinities*), which was an outcome of the struggle. A husband falls in love with the foster-daughter of his wife, and the girl starves herself to death. "I let Gretchen go to the scaffold," said Goethe once, "and Ottilie starve to death, and yet they say I am no Christian. What could be more Christian than that?"[1] There is a grim and no doubt intentional irony in the words, but there was also seriousness. For Goethe writes to a friend:[2]

"The very simple text for this discursive little book is the saying of Christ: He who looketh on a woman to lust after her, etc. I don't know if anyone has recognised it in my paraphrase. The following experience was after the writer's own heart. A young married woman, very beautiful and charming, confessed to him that she had once read the book and not understood it, but she understood it now, though she had never read it again. That was all she said: but it seemed likely that her heart had been surprised by similar emotions, and the father-confessor in her own bosom had pointed to the experiences in the novel and their results, and given her timely warning."

Since, however, Goethe was a poet, he felt with equal depth the tragedy in the ruined love of Eduard. And the following passage from *Pandora*,[3] written about the same time and under the same influences, shows how sensitive he was, now as ever, to the evanescence of human happiness in love.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*. End of 1809. Reported by Varnhagen v. Ense.
[2] To Zauper, 7th September 1821.
[3] It is gratifying to observe that this beautiful fragment, so little known in England, is appreciated by Prof. Robertson. See his recent book, *Goethe* (Routledge).

"Undisturbed, rejoicing in each other,
Overhead the bright stars ride for ever,
Evermore the moonlight floods the mountains,
And the wind-fans rustle through the thicket,
And the nightingale throbs through the rustling
Till the young heart throbs in answering gladness,
Wakened from a flowering dream of springtime.

Ah, ye gods, why are they all undying,
All these things, and our joy dies, ours only?
Gleam of stars, and flooding of the moonlight,
Shadowy depths, and falling drops, and rustling,
These things die not; our joy dies, ours only."

It is in the *Primæval Orphic Sayings* (*Urworte Orphisch*)[1] and the commentary thereon that Goethe's later views about marriage are expressed most unmistakably. We find there, first, the belief that love is not an irresistible fate, but a power capable of self-control and therefore of everlasting fidelity:

"For then first the spirit shows what it can achieve. Man the self-sufficient, the self-seeking, who flung himself on the world with his will for his only law, who felt nothing but irritation when Fortune crossed his path, realises now that he is not merely determined by Nature at his birth: he knows in his heart that he can determine himself, that he can unite with, not merely seize by force, the objects brought to him by life, and, what is greater still, that he can embrace another being, a second self, in eternal, unalterable devotion."

Next, the social implications of marriage are recognised in full:

"Family is joined to family, clan to clan, a nation has found itself and realises that the decision of the individual is of value for the whole. It makes the resolve unalterable by law, everything that love and affection offered as a free gift becomes also a duty, the source of a thousand

[1] J.-A., vol. 2. Goethe's commentary is given in the Notes.

duties, and, to make all sure for time and eternity, Church and State and posterity insist on ceremonies. All the parts seek to secure by the most binding covenants, by the greatest possible publicity, that the whole, down to its smallest fractions, be preserved from fickleness and caprice."

But this means the chaining of love in the bonds of imperfect institutions. Goethe sees this, and, oppressed by the knowledge, takes refuge in the hope that men are only at the beginning of their growth. Hope was always "his goddess," and the last of the *Sayings* is for her:

"A spirit rises, light, unfettered, free,
Ye know her well, through all spheres will she find us:
One beat of wings, and ages lie behind us!"

Between the years 1814 and 1819 Goethe was writing the series of short poems called *The Divan of East and West* (*Das West-Östliche Divan*), suggested by his studies in the poetry of Persia. Some of these lyrics were inspired and some actually written by Marianne, the wife of his friend von Willemer, for whom he had conceived a warm affection, which she returned and which was never resented by the husband. But several of them cannot be connected with any individual woman at all, and they show how widely he had now extended the scope of love. The one that closes the "Book of Zuleika" is (in the original) of singular beauty:

"Thou mayst choose a thousand forms to hide thee,
Yet, All-beloved, I shall know thee there;
Thou mayst take enchanted veils to shroud thee,
Yet, thou All-present, I shall feel thee near.

In the pure springing of the tall young cypress,
All-stateliest, I know thee well the while,
In the pure lakelet's limpid, laughing ripple,
Thou All-beguiler, I behold thy smile.

And when the fountain lifts her jet and opens,
All-playfullest, I gaze upon thy glee,
And when the cloud-forms change their changing fashion,
All-myriad-natured, I am sure of thee.

Gay in the meadow's flower-embroidered raiment,
All-starry-brightness, I can see thy face;
Where the light-handed ivy climbs and clusters,
All-clamberer, I catch thy eager grace.

When the new morning flames upon the mountains,
All-gladdener, gladly I welcome thee,
And when the pure sky arches out above us,
All-heart-enlarger, I know it breathes of thee.

If aught I learn by outward sense or inward,
All-learned teacher, I learn it all through thee,
And when I name the hundred names of Allah,
There echoes with each one a name for thee."

At the close of *The Singer's Book*, in the stanzas that he called, successively and significantly, "Self-surrender," "Fulfilment," and "Sacred Longing," the poet returns to a thought dominant in his early dramatic fragment of *Prometheus*, the thought that love and death are mysteriously allied, that the sacrament of sex, tearing two individuals out of themselves to unite them in the shock of a life-giving surrender, is only the symbol of a vaster union unattainable save by the supreme surrender of dying. When love has drunk deepest of human rapture, it discerns, dimly, this something more that is to be. The Unknown Eros touches the soul of the lover with his wings. Far away, beyond the dim light of the shadowy bedchamber, there burns a flame that draws the chosen to itself. It awakens a thirst only to be appeased in death, but that alone gives light to life:

"Tell no man, tell wise men only,
For the world might count it madness,
Him I praise who thirsts for fire,
Thirsts for death, and dies in gladness.

Thou wast got, and thou begattest
In dewy love-nights long ago;
Now a stranger love shall seize thee
When the quiet lamp burns low.

Thou art freed and lifted, taken
From the shadow of our night,
Thou art drawn by some new passion
Towards a nobler marriage-rite.

Distance cannot weight thee, soaring
Where the far enchantment calls,
Till the moth, the starfire's lover,
Drinks the light, and burns, and falls.

Die and grow! Until thou hearest
What that word can say,
The world is dark and thou a wanderer
Who has lost his way."

Such heaped-up thought and emotion went to fill some of the finest passages in the Second Part of *Faust*, but first he was fired by the last, and in some ways the most touching of his personal loves.

In 1823, seven years after his wife's death, when he was over seventy himself, he fell passionately in love with Ulrike von Levetzow, a girl of nineteen. Such a relation can be ridiculous, or worse, in the case of some men. No one who reads Goethe's letters to the girl's mother —(there were no "love-letters" to the girl herself)—or Ulrike's own reminiscences,[1] will think it so in his case. After three summers in Marienbad, where he met her with her mother and sisters, he did actually, through the Grand-Duke, make an offer of marriage. But his son was bitterly opposed, and he did not press the suit. After what was to prove the final parting, the old poet wrote one of the most moving and perfect of all his poems,

[1] *E.g.* In *Goethes Gespräche*, 25th–29th August 1823.

the "Marienbader Elegie." He foresaw his loneliness after having felt himself lifted into a heaven of happiness and goodness:

"And all through her! A secret weariness,
A numbing weight had fettered soul and body,
And round me I had seen but shapes of horror
In the drear waste, the stagnant loneliness.
Then hope shone glimmering through the door I knew,
And there stood she in the soft sunny blue.

The peace of God, we learn, brings blessedness
Here upon earth, passing all understanding;
And I dare set with it the peace of love
In the glad presence of the one beloved.
There the heart rests and nothing alien stirs
The deepest sense, the sense that he is hers.

Within the soul's pure places moves a spirit
Unto a higher, purer and unknown
Giving itself freely in thankfulness,
Reading the riddle of Him no tongue can name:
Goodness, we call it! In that high sweet air
I feel that I may stand when she is there.

Before her glance, as though it were the sun's,
Before her breath, as though it were the spring's,
Melts, bound so long in rigid bonds of ice,
The frozen self, deep in his wintry gulf.
No selfishness, no stubbornness can stay;
Before her coming they have slunk away.

It is as though she said: 'From hour to hour
In friendly wise new life is offered us.
Our yesterday has taught us little lore,
Our morrow, we are not allowed to learn.
And if the evening ever made me fear,
The sun went down and still I found some cheer.

Then do as I do, wise and gay, and meet
The moment face to face! No more delay!
Up, give it welcome, willing, swift, alive,
For work, for joy, for loving! Where thou art
Only be all things as a child can be,
So art thou all things, nought can conquer thee!'

Ah, well for her, I mused, to whom is given
The angel of the moment for her guide,
And every man may feel him blest by angels
Who lingers for the moment at her side.
But I have heard the signal to depart,
And how can that high wisdom help my heart?

. . . . . .

Far from her now! And now, these very moments,
How shall I meet them? I have nought to say.
I know they offer worth, they offer beauty,
But all's a burden, and I turn away. . . .

. . . . . .

True, there are drugs the body's pain to still,
But the soul fails in purpose and in will;

Fails at the thought: what shall he do without her?
A thousand times he calls her face to him:
It lingers, but it soon is swept away,
Changing in its pure radiance, growing dim.
What comfort then to say, when he is lone,
Seas flow and ebb, she came and she is gone?"

Nevertheless, somehow and soon, Goethe did master what had to be mastered. There was an art greater than memory, an art by which all experiences of beauty, evanescent though they seem, can be taken up into the growing and immortal fabric of the spirit. This was the art by which to meet the moment as Ulrike did, and through which it could be made to endure. That same summer he had written stanzas of gratitude to a musician, Mme Szymanowska, whose playing had soothed him in his passion. These he now resolved to put in the third place of a trilogy, the *Trilogie der Leidenschaft*—the first place being taken by the lines "To Werther," the second by the "Marienbader Elegy"—and so to end the whole poem, as most of his poems do end, in harmony.

RECONCILIATION.

"Passion and pain are sisters. Who can comfort
The stifled heart losing so rich a gain?
Where have the hours gone that fled so swiftly?
The loveliest was found for him in vain.
Now his steps falter, darkness round him lies,
The glorious world grows grey before his eyes.

Then music hovers like an angel weaving
A million melodies to one clear whole,
And piercing through and through our human nature,
Eternal beauty fills, brims up the soul.
The eyes grow dim, learning for higher spheres
The sacred worth of melody and tears.

And thus the sore heart lightened, strengthened, learns
That still it lives and beats and fain would beat
To lay pure gratitude for lavish giving
Wholly and freely at the giver's feet,
Where once he felt—so may it ever be!—
The double joy of love and melody."

That November, at a farewell gathering in the musician's honour when a toast was drunk to "Memory," Goethe broke out in contempt of the poverty-stricken word:

"I can't endure what you mean by 'Memory.' It's a wretched helpless way of expressing oneself. Everything great, beautiful, significant that has ever happened to us must be not 'remembered,' recalled from outside, as though we had to hunt for it: it must from the first mingle with our own nature, be made one with us, beget in us a new and a better self, and so live on in us for ever, active and creative. There is no Past that we ought to call back by our longing, there is only an ever-renewed Now, creating itself from the growing elements of what has been, and the true longing must always be productive, must always make something new and something better. Have we not all felt this during the last days?

Do we not all feel that the lovely and noble Vision who must leave us now has made us better, bigger? She cannot vanish from us now, she has gone right down into our hearts, she lives on in us, with us, and if she should try to slip from me again, I will not let her go, I hold her fast in me for ever." [1]

The words were for Mme Szymanowska: the deeper reference was for Ulrike. And what he held to with this self-denying, self-creating grasp he was to embody in his lifelong drama. The triumph of Galatea that closes the "Classic Walpurgisnacht" in the Second Part of *Faust* does much to supply the place of the scene he had planned in which the hero should prevail on Proserpine to give him Helen. Galatea is the vice-gerent of Venus, the visible manifestation of Beauty upon earth, as Helen was in her hour, but she is also an avatar of Ulrike, "the fairest of daughters fair," who comes to her father Nereus, the weary ancient loving-hearted wizard of the sea. And Nereus under a Prospero-like disguise, with Prospero's irritability and Prospero's patience, speaks for the heart of the old poet himself.

Only once in each year can Galatea come, borne on her pearly car, with her company of Graces about her, and only for a passing moment,

> "Yet one glance is so dear, so dear,
> Alone it pays for the barren year."

The vision passes, it was bound to pass. Nevertheless it abides. The light of it is always near, however far:

> "Auch noch so fern
> Schimmert's hell and klar,
> Immer nah und wahr."

Because of this immanent eternity the triumph of

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 4th November 1823.

Galatea leads straight to the triumph of death. The Homunculus, the spirit not yet born, shut up in the crystal phial and longing to be free, symbol of man's effort to make himself fully real, flames up at the sight of her loveliness in a rush of love, breaks his glass, pours himself out, dies to be born in earnest. And the pageant closes with a chorus of praise to the Nature that offers man the chance of loving and gives occasion for the last adventure of death.

The love thus symbolised by the outburst of the Homunculus is more than the love of sex, for, like his master Plato, Goethe saw the quality of love in all the aspirations of men. Wordsworth's demand for the union of sympathy and science was never stronger than his. "Man cannot learn to know a thing," he wrote,[1] "unless he loves it, and the deeper and fuller the knowledge is to be, the stronger, the more intense and the more living must be the love, I will even say the passion." Again, "Dislike and hatred fetter the observer: even if he has insight, they limit him to the surface. But let sympathy and love be married to insight and then the world and mankind will lie open before him: he may enter on the path which will lead him to the highest heights of all." [2] Love is no king, it is more: "it does not govern men, it makes them grow." [3]

As Goethe drew towards old-age he struck the same note in the great stanzas he called "Proemion" and set

[1] In a letter to Jacobi, 10th May 1812.

[2] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 286.

[3] " Die Liebe herrscht nicht, aber sie bildet und das ist mehr." From *Das Märchen* (*The Tale of Tales*), J.-A., vol. 16. In the *Unterhaltungen Deutscher Ausgewanderten*. Compare his constant quotation of St John's " Little children, love one another " as the basis for his philosophy of life, *e.g.* to Carlyle in 1826, and to Frau Herder in 1786, forty years earlier.

at the opening of his poems "God and the World." Love begins man's search for the Absolute, love expands and completes it.

"In the name of Him who caused Himself to be,
Creating ever from eternity,
In His name who made faith and trust and love,
The strength of things and man's activity,
Oft-named and still unfathomed mystery:

Far as thy hearing holds, far as thy sight,
Thou findest only known shapes like to His,
And soon thy spirit's furthest fire-flight
Hath store enough of symbols, likenesses.
Thou art drawn onward, sped forth joyously,
And where thou wanderest path and place grow bright;
No more thou reckonest, Time is no more for thee,
Now every footstep is Infinity.

What were a God who stood outside the whole,
Spun at His ring and let it twirl alone?
Nay, He must move the whole world from within,
His heart in Nature's and her own in His,
So that what lives and moves and dwells in Him
Can never lose His spirit and His strength.

Within us also lies a universe:
And they do well who take the best they know
And call it God, their God, trust to Him so
All things in earth beneath and heaven above,
Whom they can fear, and, where it may be, love."

The drama of *Faust* begins and ends on the same chord of cosmic sympathy perfecting individual passion. In the Prologue God commends His angels to the shining bands of love that uphold the ever-growing world, while the whole play closes with a vision of what is eternal in womanhood drawing the mystical choir forward for ever by love. And in that eternity Gretchen has her part.

CHAPTER IV

PRELUDE AND PROLOGUE TO FAUST

We will now pass to the play itself. It begins with a *Prelude on the Stage* written between 1798 and 1801 and as fresh and appropriate to our own day as it was to its own. In this Prelude, it is clear, Goethe stands, half-ironically, on his own defence. Each of the characters has something of himself: the practical man of the world, the humorist and the young poet and lover still alive in the ageing man. Goethe knows what can be said and is said, now as often as then, about the abuses of the stage. But also, as a theatrical manager, he knows what the public wants, as a believer in life he thinks they may profit even when they only desire distraction, and he is prepared to carry them with him on his poet's journey "from Heaven through all the world to Hell."

After the Prelude follows the *Prologue in Heaven*, a summary in little of the journey from Heaven to Hell. For the angels are extolling the universe and Mephistopheles sneering at man. Mephistopheles has fallen from his first place, the place of Lucifer's princes, but while he hates the light, his hatred is the fierce and intimate passion aroused by something to which his own essence belongs.[1] And he may still rejoin the sons of

[1] The connection with Lucifer is traditional, and in *Faust* it is indicated by the lines about Mephistopheles' parent Chaos, the Darkness

God on great occasions. No translation has ever been adequate to the lyrics where the three Archangels exalt the spheres. The original is unapproachable. Even Shelley could not capture its broad and rushing rhythm. And here the poverty of translation is more than usually deplorable, because an integral part of Goethe's plan lies in the contrast between the Universe as an archangel sees it, "perfect as on the primal day," and the insight, acute though that is, of Mephistopheles. God understands both, but He gives the precedence to the archangels. And it is through the nobility of sound and rhythm that the poet wins the effect he wants, making us feel that the angels who praise the ultimate perfection of things are nearer the truth than Mephistopheles who derides their imperfection.

Yet Mephistopheles is indispensable. And in the Prologue he shows the characteristics he is to display throughout the drama. He is the most interesting and profound of Goethe's dramatic creations. Like Shakespeare's Caliban he is at once a symbol and an individual; like him, something less than human, but, unlike him, also something more. For he has a double aspect. On the one hand, he is the spirit that denies, and he denies, especially, love, that love whereby the whole creation moves upward. Lust he can understand and feel; he is defeated by it at the very end of the drama. But he cannot give himself to another, for he is the assertion of the self when it means only to be selfish. Hence the

which brought forth the Light (1350 ff). At the same time he was not conceived as Lucifer in person, to judge from his reference to Lucifer at the end of the scene in the *Urfaust*, where he meets Gretchen for the first time. According to one suggestion the old form of his name, "Mephostophiles," actually meant "Hater of Light" (μὴ, φῶς, φίλος). But Goethe told Zelter he could not really say how the name arose. (Letter to Zelter, 20th November 1829).

repulsive coldness that always marks him. On the other hand, the assertion of the self is necessary for the making of the world. It had better be asserted by a devil than not asserted at all. Moreover, Mephistopheles has the intellect of a god. True, that intellect is negative. Everywhere it sees defect: nowhere, when left to itself, excellence. And therefore, clever as he is, Mephistopheles can be very stupid. He thinks it merely silly of Gretchen to choose the scaffold rather than go against her conscience: he never expected it of her, any more than the clever Iago, whom Mephistopheles resembles in other ways, expected Emilia to die for her mistress. Thus Goethe would not call him "dæmonic:" he was "far too negative." [1]

But still the intellect is there: Mephistopheles despises men because he remembers perfection; for Lucifer and his like were archangels once. And for that very reason his criticism can prompt men to creative action. Therefore, when God classes him, as He does here, among the spirits who deny, He adds that he is the one He least dislikes. For on men, always ready to sink into apathy, Mephistopheles acts as a provocative force: he will not let them admire themselves, and he dangles an exciting life before them, a life that provokes in the end, not, as he now desires, to Evil, but to Good. That is the bearing of God's remark that he

> "can sting and stir and, devil-like, create."

Create in this sense he does, although he detests the creation of God, and would destroy it if he could. But he desires living subjects of his own: he has no use, as he

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 2nd March 1831. This was said in conversation and must not be pressed too far. Mephistopheles is undoubtedly a "dæmon" of a kind, and a very powerful one.

declares outright in the Prologue, for dead bodies. His game is "cat-and-mouse," he wants to keep the spirits of men alive, though alive in the tormented stagnation that clutches at the powers of hell for an escape. Thus when Faust dies, he rages at the idea that "everything is over," and in the First Part, when Faust curses the whole of life, he opposes this cry for death by every means in his power. True, that is only because he intends Faust's damnation. But what he achieves is the opposite. There is more in man than the devil counts on. Faust reacts and reaches safety, not only in spite of, but actually because of, his influence. For Mephistopheles, though he revolts against the light, is all the same, as he knows himself, a portion of "the Darkness that brought the Light to birth." And that is one reason why, as the drama proceeds and Faust begins to learn, Mephistopheles appears less and less as the tempter and more and more as the instrument of Faust's creative purpose. He bets with God in the Prologue that he will destroy Faust, but from the very beginning it is made clear that he will not win his bet. For by his fundamental nature he cannot help contributing to Faust's progress. It is this fact that explains the serene assurance of the Lord:

"*The Lord.* So be it. Do as you are minded;
Lure this man's soul from his eternal Source,
Drag him away, if you can hold him fast,
Along your downward course,
And then confess, when you are put to shame,
A true man struggling in the dark and blinded,
Still knows the way that leads him home at last.
Meph. All right. It won't last long, you'll see.
As to the bet, I've no anxiety.
And when I reach my goal,
You'll let me have my triumph, won't you, whole?
Dust shall he eat, and greedily,
Just like the Snake, my cousin.

The Lord. Even so.
There also you are free.
I have no hate for creatures of your kind.
Of all the spirits who deny
The scamp's the last of all to trouble me.
Too soon man's effort tires and falls slack,
Too soon he craves for rest on any terms;
So I must set a comrade at his back
Can sting and stir and, devil-like, create.
But ye, true sons of God, go, find your bliss
In all the living wealth of loveliness.
Let that which grows, which works and lives for ever,
Enfold you in the shining bands of love,
While ye make fast
Shifting appearances that float and flicker
By thoughts that last.
(*The Heavens close. The Archangels disappear.*)

Meph. (*alone*).
I like to see the old boy now and then,
And take good care never to break with him.
In such a great grandee it's really civil
To talk and be so human with the devil."
(323–53. *End of the scene.*)

Such is the chief significance of Mephistopheles, known to his creator from youth "as friend and foe." [1] And it is difficult not to ask at once whether it does not involve the belief that Mephistopheles himself has it in him to be saved? Whether all desire, as Aristotle surmised, searches after, not any kind of Pleasure, but after one Pleasure and the Same, because everything has a touch of the divine? The drama is full of such hints, and of something more than hints. Goethe himself spoke more than once of the redemption of his Devil, and amused himself at the thought of the horror it would arouse among the pious:

"They won't forgive me in a hurry if ever they get to

[1] "Den ich so früh als Freund und Feind gekannt" (*Paralipomena*, 47; *Faust*, Insel-Verlag).

the place in the continuation of *Faust* where the Devil himself is pitied and pardoned by God!—Even Mme de Staël was shocked because I had made God the Father so friendly to the Devil.—What will she say if she meets him again in a higher sphere, perhaps even in heaven itself?" [1] A reminiscence of Wieland's points in the same direction. He told Abeken that "Goethe never disclosed the plans for his *Faust*; only once, in a gathering of excited friends, he said, 'You think the Devil will carry off Faust? On the contrary: Faust carries off the Devil.'" (*Umgekehrt*: *Faust holt den Teufel*).[2]

Yet the orthodox need not have been scandalised nor the lovers of literature surprised. For Goethe's plan was only the ancient story of the Fallen Angel inverted, and the fascination that this old legend always possessed for him he describes in the Eighth Book of his Autobiography, where he gives an account of the creed he framed for himself after Leipsic. The very metaphors used in expounding it occur again in *Faust*. Lucifer, according to Goethe's mythology, springs from the productive force of the Godhead, the Trinity that is unity in multiplicity. The creation of the universe is entrusted to him and to the spirits that proceed from him. Thus he was set to serve the divine scheme, and Goethe's youthful conception has a strange likeness not only to the Neo-Platonism which he tells us lay behind it, but also and even more to the modern mythology of Whitman's *Square Deific*, where Satan appears as a fourth person added to the Trinity. But Lucifer revolts against the source from which he sprang and tries to be sufficient to himself.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, vol. iv, p. 473. From Falk's recollections. Probably about 1820.

[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, vol. i, p. 134. Abeken understood Goethe to have said this in the early days at Weimar.

This attempt limits him to a beggarly fragment of reality, and all the powers who follow him are shut up along with him. The full work of creation is arrested; for creation is expansion as well as concentration, escape from the self as well as assertion of it. Where Lucifer rules there can be nothing but darkness and dragging weight. He and his like may be symbolised by the heavy "earthy" element in the world of matter.[1] To balance the one-sided force of Lucifer and save the creation from stifling in chaos, the Trinity send forth another impulse making for the upward return to themselves. Lucifer cannot escape this all-pervading power: Light is born out of Chaos: this is the true "primal day," and now creation rises step by step till Man appears, whose task it is to complete the making of the world by the unselfish making of himself.[2] But man falls in his turn, like Lucifer, and needs redemption if the world is ever to become a cosmos. For it can only become that through the power of love.

Mephistopheles, who rejects love, is the son of Chaos, and Chaos, while it remains Chaos, has but a shrunken content. We may say that the elements are there, but we must add that they cannot develop. Goethe would use the term "Elementarisches" to denote what remained chaotic,[3] and, in the drama, the Angels as they toil up the

[1] This particular symbolism is carried on in *Faust*, where it appears sometimes in rather a puzzling way, side by side with the symbolism of the " Earth " in the great sense involving the manifestation of God in Nature.

[2] This view of unselfishness as the passage " to a greater perfection " was doubtless confirmed by Goethe's study of Spinoza. In a well-known passage of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* he speaks of his reverence for the saying " He who loves God cannot wish that God should love him in return," and of his desire to make it a maxim of his own.

[3] See for example *Goethes Gespräche*, 4th May 1811, in a criticism of Beethoven's music, which, for the rest, always impressed him profoundly.

sky with Faust in their arms, sing of "die Elemente" as the forces hampering their flight, forces grown into the heart of Faust and dragging him down again. But these very metaphors show that neither Lucifer nor Chaos are nullities. The Elements are the elements of something. Once for all, the self and the assertion of it are indestructible factors of the universe. "Such is Nature," said Goethe once, "that the Trinity could not have bettered it. It is a great organ, on which our Lord God plays, and the Devil blows the bellows." [1]

The words might be taken to justify an all too easy philosophy of life. But Goethe was well aware that the price would have to be paid for the Devil's work, as in fact it is paid not only by Faust, but by those who help to redeem him.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 8th September 1815.

CHAPTER V

FAUST'S DESPAIR

The drama proper opens with Faust alone in his study at night. This scene was in the *Urfaust*, and it shows a narrow vaulted chamber in an ancient Gothic building, with Faust seated at his desk, impatient and miserable. He is a man in his thirties,[1] and he has spent his youth in the quest of knowledge. But it has brought him no certainty, and he has had little experience of action, none of beauty and none of love. On these points Goethe fastens. As we have seen, he believed that men, if they are to grow, must grow on all sides. "To think and to act," he wrote,[2] "to act and to think, that is the sum of all wisdom, admitted from all ages, not understood by all. Both must pulse through life, as we breathe in and out, unceasingly. He who takes for his law what the Genius of human understanding whispers in the ear of the new-born child, and tests action by thought and thought by action, he can never go wrong, and if he does he will soon find his way home again."

[1] This seems the natural inference from the lines at the beginning where he says that he has been a "Master" for ten years. In the Witch's Cauldron-scene, written when Goethe himself was nearer forty than thirty, he appears to be thought of as older still, somewhere about fifty, for he wants the witch to take "thirty years off his back."

[2] In *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Bk. 2, c. 9, *ad fin.*

Faust is already feeling the truth of this. He is, to quote Shakespeare's Richard,

> "like one lost in a thorny wood,
> That rends the thorns and is rent with the thorns,
> Seeking a way and straying from the way;
> Not knowing how to find the open air,
> But toiling desperately to find it out." [1]

And later, when he sits down to translate the first sentence of St John, he cannot bring himself to write "In the beginning was the Word," nor even "the Thought," nor yet "the Power," but simply "In the beginning was the Deed." Here, however, he is concerned above all with knowledge and his monologue opens with the cry that his learning has taught him nothing. His room, crowded with dusty papers, skeletons and obsolete instruments, seems to him the barren negation of life, cut off from the truth of Nature. And in despair he has given himself to Magic.

Towards Magic, as towards Mephistopheles, Goethe's attitude is complex. He had been attracted by it, as we saw, when he returned home from Leipsic and plunged into alchemy. What drew him was the belief, which he never lost, that there is a harmony between the mind and Nature, and that no limits should be assigned to man's power of understanding her, sooner or later, in this world or another. Thus the belief in magic, characteristic of the Renaissance to which the legend of Faust belongs, has the germ of a truth in it; and Goethe would always have thought it more promising than a pedantic and unenterprising science. What was wrong with it, as he early came to see, was its arrogance, acquisitiveness and consequent superstition. For it is the attempt of a man to impose himself on Nature, and this always means

[1] 3 *Henry VIth*, Act 3, Sc. 2.

delusion of some kind. Of the Faust who trusts in magic Mr Santayana writes truly: "He believes, or is willing to make believe, that apart from any settled conditions laid down by nature or God, personal experience can evoke the experience it covets by sheer force and assurance." [1] Magic is strong because of its imagination and its daring, it is weak because it cannot resist the temptation to ignore unpalatable facts. Some such temptation, Goethe thought, lay near every imaginative student of science. "When a man who is called to the life of observation," he wrote in the preface to his *Morphologie*, "begins really to struggle with Nature, he feels at first a mad desire to subjugate the objects before him. But soon they press on him with such power that he is forced to realise how much reason he has to recognise their might and reverence it." [2]

On this recognition true science depends. But to Faust it is always Magic rather than Science that appeals. The over-haste and the love of domination accompany him to the end. In Magic, however, there are many grades, from the "white" "natural magic" with little fault except the impatience and credulity of an undisciplined imagination to the black devil's magic, deliberately giving up reason, wanting to deceive and be deceived, and so paltering with the gross delusions of Auerbach's Cellar and the grim absurdities of the Witch's Cauldron. It is white magic that holds Faust here. He opens the book of Nostradamus and contemplates the sign of the Macrocosm. It gives him at once a vision of the whole universe, as seen by a pantheist *sub specie æternitatis*:

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[1] *Three Philosophic Poets.*

[2] J.-A., vol. 39, p. 249. For a sympathetic account of "die natürliche Magie," see Goethe's remarks on J. B. Porta in the *Geschichte der Farbenlehre* (J.-A., vol. 40, p. 190).

"How all things weave themselves to one,
Working, living, each in other,
While up and down the angelic powers go,
Bearing the golden pitchers to and fro!
The splendour swings from hand to hand!

On wings of fragrance, on wings that bless
From heaven through all the world they press
Till all rings loud with their loveliness."

(447–53.)

But Faust, like Goethe himself, wants more than the imaginative apprehension; he wants the vision to be realised everywhere in detail, as science and practice try, or should try, to realise it. And this cannot be done by magic. Hence his immediate reaction:

"A glorious pageant! Yet a pageant only!
Infinite Nature, mother-breasts unknown,
Where shall I find you, I who die of dearth?
Ye on whom hang the heavens and the earth,
Well-heads of life, to whom the dry lips strain,
Ye overflow, and I faint here, in vain!"

(454–59.)

He turns away from the Sign of the Macrocosm and looks at that of the Earth-Spirit. It is not easy to say precisely what Goethe meant by the second Sign. Some commentators have identified the Earth-Spirit outright with Nature. But the two are distinguished later in the Forest-scene, and if we do call it "Nature," it must be Nature in a special sense, the principle of physical energy on the earth and in human life. Being limited to the earth, the Spirit shows the clash of cosmic forces without their full reconciliation. And the distinction between its sign and the sign of the Macrocosm seems parallel to that made in the Prologue between the turning earth with its alternations of bright day and dreadful darkness, its

tossing sea and chain of tempests, on the one hand, and, on the other, "the calm of God's celestial day," which the Three Archangels prefer to contemplate.

Further, it should be noticed that there is and always was, even in the *Urfaust*, a close connection between the Earth-Spirit and Mephistopheles.[1] This of itself shows that Mephistopheles was never conceived as a mere ordinary devil. Twice in the final form, and once in the first draft,[2] Faust declares that the Spirit sent him this companion. Now Mephistopheles wants to damn Faust by luring him on to satisfy his physical passions. He is the element of self-assertion, and that is also the element of physical life, whereby every creature, as Spinoza said, must endeavour to preserve and develop its own being. Indeed, it has been held that Mephistopheles is a direct manifestation of the Earth-Spirit. But there is nothing to warrant our going so far as this. We might say rather that, while the Earth-Spirit is an obedient instrument in the hand of the Divine, Mephistopheles has "fallen from grace." Before his fall he may have been at one with the Earth-Spirit, and traces of this abide with him; but through his disobedience to the heavenly law he is now detached from that high company. And in this detachment his chance of corrupting men arises whenever the human self cries out for satisfaction on any terms.

But Faust can bear the Erd-Geist no better than the Macrocosm. At first he thinks he could, for the Spirit is nearer to his own life. Before it appears, and with only the sign before him, he hails it as kin to himself in a way that the Macrocosm cannot be:

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[1] It was Kuno Fischer who first emphasised the importance of this, and his work is still well worth reading.

[2] In the Forest-scene and in the Prose-scene near the close of the *Urfaust*, called later "A Gloomy Day" ("Trüber Tag").

"How different is the working of this sign!
Earth-Spirit, thou art nearer mine!
I feel my strength leap up like fire,
Flushed as with wine.
Now could I meet the mighty world and know
The fullness of Earth's joy, the weight of all her woe,
Laugh with the tempest, smite as smites the hail,
Hear the wreck crack beneath me, and not quail."
(460–67.)

But on this swelling mood falls the shock of the mighty and appalling vision, the appearance of the Spirit itself, the essence of all physical and animal force, sweeping before him in one flaming rush of power. Sheer terror, if nothing else, compels Faust to feel that there is something here beyond the reach of his magic:

"*Faust.* Woe's me! For thou art more than I can bear!
The Spirit. Thy panting spirit thirsted after me,
It cried to hear my voice, to see my face,
I heard the passion of thy prayer,
And I am here!
What miserable fear
Cows thee, poor Superman?
Where is the challenge of thy soul?
Where is the Faust whose breast
Could make a world and bear it unoppressed,
Quivering with joy, who thought to grow as great
As we, the Spirits, and rise our equal mate?
Art thou the Faust whose voice rang out to me,
Whose might rushed forth eager to meet my might?
One whisper of my breath,
And the worm, smitten through with death,
Shudders away in terror from my sight!
Faust. Vision of flame!
Thou shalt not make me fear.
Yes, I am Faust, thy peer.
The Spirit. In the storms of action, the floods of life,
I surge and sway
Above and below,
Hither, thither, to and fro.
Birth and death, an infinite sea,

A web that changes eternally,
A living fire!
I work at the loom of Time, I smite with the weaver's rod,
In the whirr and the roar I fashion the living garment of God!

Faust. Thou who dost course the world from end to end,
Creative spirit, how near I am to thee!

The Spirit. Thou art the peer
Of him thou comprehendest, not of me!"

(485–513.)

Herewith the Spirit vanishes and Faust is left in worse case than ever. The Macrocosm he could see only as a vision, not an actuality. The Earth-Spirit he had not the power to endure when it appeared. The moment had indeed been a great one, "a blessed moment," he calls it later,[1] wherein he felt at once infinitesimally small and greater than the cherubim. But the manifestation had been like that given to Job, and the greatness of it was too much for his humanity. As it disappears, he is a prey to renewed bewilderment and doubt.

"Thou art the peer
Of him thou comprehendest, not of me."

Of whom then? He asks himself, and finds no answer. "I, the image of God, and not even thy peer!" Later,[1] the "thunder-word" seems to point him back to a life among men, but he loathes the thought of that level. There is courage in the way Faust faced the Earth-Spirit, but there is also egotism. It is like him to claim equality not as the representative of man's thought but in the name of his little personal self: "Yes, I am Faust, thy

[1] Ll. 610 ff. This part was written much later than the *Urfaust*, not till after 1797. But the prostration of Faust when the Earth-Spirit vanishes and his colloquy with Wagner were already in the first draft. The new material did not begin till l. 606.

peer!" If the reader puts his own name in that line, he will feel the arrogance of it.

At this moment Faust's pupil Wagner knocks at the door. Wagner is an earnest and dull student, a pedant by nature, but an honest and laborious one. His well-meant interruption maddens Faust, who meets his trite remarks on the vast range of possible knowledge and the difficulties in the road with the savage irony of a man hearing what is life and death to him discussed in complacent platitudes. But Wagner has something that Faust does not value enough. In the Second Part we shall find that his work is needed for the deliverance of his master. Meanwhile, Faust has nothing but contempt for his patient tenacity:

> "How is it all the hope has not long fled
> Out of that shallow, dull and stupid head?
> He gropes for treasure, and when his foolish hand
> Seizes an earthworm, thinks the find is grand!"
> (602–5.)

In the *Urfaust* and in the *Fragment* these words closed the opening scene, and in the next Faust appeared already bound to Mephistopheles with nothing to indicate the character of the compact. When, later on, Goethe filled in this "great gap," he added, among other passages, the close of Faust's soliloquy, where he contemplates suicide. For he is flagging in the struggle and ready for rest on any terms, as the Lord in the Prologue had said all men were apt to flag. He may feel at bottom, as was indicated in a passage written but not published, that he should

> "learn to know despair,
> learn to be greater than despair,"

but he is losing his courage. This is due not merely to his baffled thirst for knowledge. He is also a man who

wants to be happy in something better than "a dog's life," who is sick of the "eternal drone," "Thou shalt refrain! Thou shalt refrain!" and he turns with disgust from the thought of middle-age with its inevitable cares and disillusionments:

"Over the noblest gift, the spirit's splendour,
There floods an alien, ever-alien stream;
When this world's wealth is won, our souls surrender,
The larger hope we call a lying dream.
Our life of life, the visions grave and glorious,
Fade, and the earthly welter is victorious.

Imagination once, wide-winged with hope,
Filled all eternity and soared to heaven,
But now it dwindles to a narrow scope
While joy on joy drops round us, wrecked and riven.
Deep in the heart Care comes to build her nest,
And there she rears her secret brood of sorrows,
She rocks herself and wails, she will not rest,
Killing all peace, and every day she borrows
New masks and fresh disguises; she will come
As wife or child, hidden in hearth and home,
In fire, water, poison, or the sword;
And we shrink back, as men whom life abhorred,
Tremble when no blow falls, and, fever-tost,
Still weep and wail for what is never lost."

(634–51.)

The stress laid on Care in this passage should be noted. The same word and the same tone occur in the scene just before Faust's death, at the end of the Second Part, and there is reason for assigning the conception of both this scene and that to the early spring of 1798, when Goethe was at the height of "success." [1] But, as we have observed, not far below the surface there always lay for Goethe a recurrent disgust of life, a "goose's game," as he called it to Zelter. The word *Sorge* expressed for him the cause of this feeling. The troubles and anxieties

[1] See Appendix.

of life are sometimes praised by moralists for their purifying effect on character. But they are a menace to all who cannot face them. The elect of the earth may defy them. A Prometheus will not hate life because the dream-flowers fade and the blossoms of young hope wither. But in the heart of a Faust Sorge makes her nest and the tree of life perishes at the root.

Suddenly his eyes fall on a phial of poison, and he sees in it the one chance of escape. He has not the heart to follow his obscure impulse towards practical life; he is experienced enough to foresee the disasters that, born of action, will also fetter it. And he knows only too well the misery in the nonfulfilment of contemplation. To go forward now seems to him only to join the long train of those

> "Who loved the light and in the heavy darkness,
> Searching for truth, lost the right way for ever."

It is midnight, and he takes the poison-cup in his hand, but before it touches his lips he hears the Easter-songs.

Nothing can be lovelier than the music of these in the original. They seem to float and run along the sky, like children of the sun. There are two moments in the drama where Goethe used Christian symbolism. This is one, and the other is at the close, where the same rhythm recurs. Goethe was never, after Strasburg, an orthodox Christian, either Protestant or Catholic; and he was, among other things, very much of a pagan—"the old pagan," he liked to call himself. Asceticism and martyrology he detested; the belief in miracle seemed to him blasphemy against science; and he could accept no infallibility in Church or Book or Person. But there were elements in Christianity that attracted him strongly: the idea of "grace," the confidence in a love behind Nature,

most of all, perhaps, the insistence that the ideal must be embodied in the actual. Hence it is to the Christian teaching that he ascribes the most remarkable of the four Reverences in the famous passage from *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, the reverence "for what is below us," the reverence that "does not desert the earth and escape to a higher home," but "recognises the Divine in meanness and poverty, in humiliation, disgrace, shame, sorrow, agony and death; yes, and can even look on sins and crimes with love and respect, and take them, not as hindrances, but as helps to the Good and the Godlike." And this it performs, "not in order to wean us from existence, but to make us realise its imperishable worth." [1]

The patience of hope, not the patience of Stoicism, was what Goethe valued. "Love, Hope and Faith," he writes in a characteristic apologue, "once met in a quiet hour, to fashion a perfect figure, a heavenly Pandora, the giver of all good things. And they called her Patience." [2] No one was more sensitive than Goethe to the disgust and bewilderment aroused by the chaos of actual life, and no one more convinced that this was somehow the stuff out of which the true world had to be shaped. "Children, go back to life!" [3] That close to Mignon's funeral hymn was the refrain, silent or sung, to every song of his. His own life was set to the brave tune, and the rhythm can be felt in little things as well as in large; he hated the trappings of grief and the whinings over death when those whom he loved died. And so, because he turned back to his work steadfastly and cheerfully and immediately, he was called heartless.

But Faust's return to earth at the Easter-song has not

[1] *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*, Bk. 2, c. 1.
[2] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 858.
[3] *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Bk. 8, c. 9, *ad fin.*

this quality of resolution. It is due not to conviction, but to emotional softening. He yields to the right impulse, but all the time he half thinks it is wrong.

> "Soft mighty voices, what is it you seek,
> Here in the dust, far from the courts of heaven?
> Sing not to me! Go, sing unto the weak!
> I have no faith to marvel at your tidings.
> . . . . . .
> And yet the clear sounds that I loved of yore
> Cling round me, call me back to life once more."
> (762–70.)

He speaks the truth when he says later that he was only like a child cheated by memories of happiness. The idea of suicide is charmed out of him for the time, but there is nothing to take its place. The house is empty, swept and garnished, and the owner will soon wander in dry places as before, seeking rest and finding none.

CHAPTER VI

THE PACT WITH MEPHISTOPHELES

For the time, however, Faust wins a kind of peace. In the next scene we find him on Easter-day walking in the country with Wagner. It is a delightful morning in early spring:

"Old winter has gone
In his weakness back to the mountains hoar." [1]

And the people pour out from the dark gateway of the old town:

"Their Lord is risen who was slain,
And they themselves are risen again,
From narrow house and ill-lit room,
From toil and traffic and trade and gloom,
From under the roof where the gables meet
Crushing them down in the stifling street,
Forth from the church and its solemn night
Out they come to the glorious light!
See what a scurry of joyful feet!
Over the gardens and fields they go,
And the river rocks them to and fro,
With the boats so laden they almost sink,
But gay and gleeful from brink to brink!
Look there, far up, on the furthest hill,
I can see the shimmer of bright coats still!
We are nearing the village; I hear it all,
The joyous clamour, call on call,
The people's heaven for great and small.
They shout as gaily as they can!
Ah, here I am, here dare I be a man!" (921–40.)

[1] From Shelley's "Ginevra," an obvious reminiscence, if not a conscious translation, of "Der alte Winter" *u.s.w.* (906 ff.).

This relief which comes to Faust from mingling with the common people is of great importance for the whole movement of the drama, and Goethe emphasises it by the contrast with Wagner. It is Faust who understands and sympathises with the crowd, while they in their turn are full of gratitude for his help in the past when the country was plague-stricken. But Wagner shrinks from their roughness, finding them only vulgar, as some of them certainly are. It is Faust who feels that only among ordinary men can he be a man. This scene may thus be regarded as an anticipation of the last on earth, where Faust dies in something like content, superintending the dykes that will protect from the flood a free people on a free land, himself one among them. Goethe is sometimes thought of as a cold aristocrat, sometimes as an egoistic poet living in a closed "palace of art." [1] But either view is a misapprehension. It is true that he never was a political democrat, and that the French Revolution filled him with repulsion, although he was too wise not to realise that it meant a new era. This was because he regarded government as an art for experts, and had himself tried his hand at it for eleven hard years at Weimar. But his sympathy with the common people, as he had met and known them, was always close and real. In an early letter to Frau von Stein (4th December 1777), he speaks of those "whom," he says, "we call the lower classes, and God calls the highest. They have all the virtues at once, loyalty, delight in the smallest pleasures, innocence, patience—patience—endurance in all things—I mustn't lose myself in exclamations!" Again, at a time of distress he writes, "I can't go on with my *Iphigenia*. The King of Tauris has to speak as if there were no stocking-makers

[1] Tennyson expressly said that he did not mean any reference to Goethe, but most readers do apply his poem to Goethe.

starving in Apolda." [1] His Gretchen is a genuine daughter of the people, and it was the simplicity of Christiane that charmed him.

Thus, while Goethe was an aristocrat, it was in the noble Platonic meaning of the term, where aristocracy implies service. And precisely the nature of that service is one of the things which Faust is to learn. He has, we have said, a foretaste of it here. And it is attractive to conjecture that the theme may have been suggested to Goethe by the puppet-plays where Faust's servant, Caspar, the typical German yokel, is constantly defeating the devils through his homely wit.[2] But at this time everything is poisoned for Faust by the bitter sense of his own inadequacy. When Wagner simply and generously praises his philanthropy and its reward, Faust meets him with a cynical disclaimer. During the plague he and his father, by their absurd methods, killed far more patients than they cured. And here once more appears Goethe's reaction against alchemical nonsense taking the place of genuine science. Faust's father had believed firmly in alchemy. Wagner attempts the usual conventional consolations—a man can only do his best and press on from the point his father had reached. But Faust bursts out once more in a cry for escape.

The sun is now setting and the beauty of the evening fills him with the idea of flight, somehow, somewhere, into a world of enchantment. And he calls upon the spirits of the air. Wagner is horrified. There are such spirits, he knows, and they are all deceivers, "whispering angelic music when they lie." And at this moment it is that Mephistopheles appears, in the traditional form of a

[1] Also to Frau von Stein, 6th March 1779.

[2] See, for example, the different versions collected in Petsch's edition of Simrock's *Doctor Johannes Faust* (Reclams-Bibliothek, Nr. 6378, 6379)

black poodle. Nothing could show more clearly that it is precisely the idea of escape from the struggle that leads Faust into his temptation. Mephistopheles, as he admits himself later on, had been waiting and spying for the proper moment. In the behaviour of the poodle Faust feels something magical, and he is in the mood to welcome all magic. He calls the creature to him. But Wagner sees nothing beyond an ordinary dog, and Faust lets himself be persuaded that there is nothing uncanny after all.

The poodle goes back with them, and we find him in the evening alone with Faust in his study. Faust has been calmed by the walk at nightfall through the fields, and the love of Man and God seems to stir in him again. Hope and Reason open out like flowers. Half by accident he has stumbled on one of the keys to life, the sympathy with ordinary men. But he has the devil in the house all the same, though he can hold him like a fox by the ears, barred from escape by virtue of the pentagram on the floor, the magic symbol of wisdom. This, by the way, is another indication that the early magic used by Faust has no positive evil in it, although it is dangerous and cannot perform all that it promises. The poodle grows restless and growls uncontrollably when Faust ponders over the first sentence in the Gospel of St John and how it should be translated. Then Faust sees that he is an evil spirit and forces him by his spells and the threat of Christ's name to reveal himself. He appears as a travelling scholar, and the two talk together frankly. Mephistopheles, for his part, with the candour of his intellect, admits his own nature. He is

> "A fragment of the Force that would
> Work Evil, yet must always work for Good.
> *Faust.* You mean?

Meph. "I am the Spirit who Denies!
And I am right; for all that comes to birth
Is fit to die and has no other worth.
Better not to be born at all!
And therefore what you choose to call
Destruction, Sin,—the Bad, in fine,—
Is just the element that's mine." (1335–44.)

Then follows the first trial of strength for Faust. The devil for the time is under his control, and he is confident of his mastery. He refuses to give way when Mephistopheles asks for liberty:

"Who holds the devil, let him keep his hold."

But Mephistopheles sets his art to work and charms Faust with a vision of ecstasy:

"Song of the Spirits.

Vanish, dark vault,
Grim roof, disappear!
Let the kindly blueness,
Heavenly, friendly,
Lie open and clear!
Were but the dark clouds driven away!
Faint stars are gleaming
And soft light streaming
From a gentler day.
In beauty immortal
The children of light
Bow downward and hover,
Float on through the height,
And all hearts follow
The lure they leave,
Their garments trailing,
Fluttering, veiling
Forest and field;
And bowers they cover
Where lover by lover,
Deep-hidden in thought,
Give all to each other,
Give all for ever.
Bower by bower!

Vines full-fraught!
Ripe bunches that dower
The twigs with their weight
Fall where the vine-press
Foams and gushes,
And ever the wine-rill
Bubbles and rushes,
Ripples through jewels
Of shining stone,
Leaving the mountains,
Behind and alone,
Broadening in lakelets
Beneath the green hill,
To lie at leisure
And dream its fill.
While the winged creatures
Travel on high,
And still as they fly
They drink their bliss
From the radiant sky
And the sun's warm kiss.
They fly to the sun
Through the golden miles
Far and far, to the Fortunate Isles,
That float on the waters
And sway to our sight,
While their sons and their daughters
Sing songs of delight,
Shout and sing to us over the waves.
In the open meadows
We see them dance,
Through the flickering shadows
They glimmer and glance,
They slip through the hollow waves.
Over the mountains
They climb in their glee,
And under the fountains
They swim through the sea,
They drift through the airs above.
They go to be free,
To be free and afar,
In the heart, the heart of the sacred star,
And the home of love." (1447–1505.)

To the lullaby of this "angelic music" Faust falls asleep, betrayed once more by his own desire to escape from reality.

> "He's not the man, by a long way yet,
> To hold the Devil in his net."

So says Mephistopheles, as he watches the sleeper complacently and then summons his rats to nibble away the pentagram and give him back full liberty of action.

The song that lulls Faust is like the crystal cup, "mantling with bright Nepenthe," given by the Spirit of Joy to Rousseau in Shelley's "Triumph of Life," exquisite in itself, but sapping a man's power to endure. It makes him want too much. So, when Faust awakes, it is to fresh bitterness. He loathes actuality more than ever, and when Mephistopheles returns, dressed now as a cavalier, he answers his invitation to a gay life with a renewed cry for death. He curses the whole of life, annihilating, so far as words can do it, every conceivable activity of man. But to this utter negation there is an answer at once from a chorus of spirits in the air.

> "Alas, alas!
> Thou hast smitten the world,
> Thou hast laid it low,
> Shattered, o'erthrown,
> Into nothingness hurled,
> Crushed by a demigod's blow!
>
> We bear them away,
> The shards of the world,
> We sing well-a-day
> Over the loveliness gone,
> Over the beauty slain.
>
> Build it again,
> Great child of the Earth,
> Build it again
> With a finer worth,

In thine own bosom build it on high!
Take up thy life once more:
Run the race again!
High and clear
Let a lovelier strain
Ring out than ever before!" (1607–26.)

Mephistopheles claims that the spirits are his, and the song. They may be, for though his object is to destroy Faust, he must keep him alive in order to damn him. And all life, in Goethe's belief, struggles toward some ideal. "The Infinite glows through every living thing":

"Die Unendlichkeit durchglühet
All' und jede Creatur."

Thus the song would be one more example of the paradox in Mephistopheles' character, forcing him to "make Good" while "meaning Bad." And now he offers Faust his services for life. Faust accepts, but under conditions, and on the compact, the wager it involves and the outcome of both, turns the significance of the drama. "Faust makes a condition with the devil at the beginning," said Goethe to Boisserée, "on which everything depends." [1]

What, then, *is* the wager? It implies, to begin with, a distinction between this life and the "next." Mephistopheles will serve Faust *here* if Faust will serve him *there*. To this Faust agrees whole-heartedly. And his reason for consenting is that his failure to meet the Earth-Spirit on equal terms has convinced him he is incapable of higher achievements. The alternative, if he means to live at all, is to fling himself into the tumult of mundane life and distract himself with perpetual change. But he

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 3rd August 1815. "Faust macht im Anfang dem Teufel eine Bedingung, woraus alles folgt."

never supposes that this will bring him real satisfaction. Every moment he will be restless. Mephistopheles knows there is some truth in this, but when speaking to Faust he denies it:

> "The time will come when you and I
> Shall rest and munch our good things as we please."

Faust at once breaks out in repudiation:

> "When I can rest upon your bed of ease,
> All's over with me then!
> When you can gull me with your flatteries
> To dream myself contented with myself,
> When your delights make me forget your lies—
> Let that day be my last!
> There is my wager!
> *Meph.* Done!
> *Faust.* And done again!
> If ever I can say
> To the bright moment as it flits away,
> 'Stay yet a little while, thou art so fair!'
> Then let me wear your chain,
> Then sink, and willingly!
> Then toll my passing bell
> And you go free!
> The clock may stop, the pointer drop,
> And time be done for me!" (1690–1706.)

The whole scene shows what the essence of the compact is. Mephistopheles thinks that he can drug Faust into believing that the life of sense will be satisfactory. Faust says in effect: "Try! But I don't believe you can!" And it is significant that the form of the wager involves the desire to make the moment "stay." But to achieve this involves, as we saw, the power to see the moment and live the moment *sub specie aeternitatis*. The Devil can't do that.

Faust takes the drug, however, with his eyes open, deliberately turning away from reason in the hope, not of

happiness—about that he is clear—but of excitement. On this rejection Mephistopheles counts for his purpose. He hopes for the assent of desperation, not the consent of satisfaction. He knows that he can never really satisfy Faust. But he does not want to satisfy him: he wants to make him forget his immortal longings and to hope, always and vainly, for escape through the only "satisfactions" left, in short to be greedy for dust, as he said in the Prologue. That is how he will play the "cat-and-mouse" game. Thus, when the desire for growth moves Faust, he meets it with his devastating irony. And Faust's despair lays him open to its full effects:

"*Faust.* I've aimed too high. Now I am on your level.
The mighty Spirit hath rejected me.
Nature is closed. The threads of thought have snapped.
Long since I sickened at all learning:
Open the dark wells of desire,
Give me their depths to cool my burning!
Prepare your shrouded magic, wrapped
In unstirred veils of mystery,
And fling me in the roar of life
Where the mad waters whirl at strife!
Triumph and torture, anguish and delight
Toss me from night to day, from day to night!
No peace for him who acts, no rest for me!
Meph. No goal, no limit! I have set you free.
Suppose you wish to gobble pleasantly,
Suck a sweet morsel everywhere you fly,
You'll get what will be perfect ecstacy.
Only plunge in and don't be shy!
Faust. I told you, it's not happiness I ask.
The life that lives in fury I must find,
Sweet torture, bliss that stings and love that loathes.
I'll take all suffering now, for I have thrust
The fevered thirst for knowledge from my mind,
And I must gather into my own breast
The scattered griefs and glories of mankind,
Experience all! All that men have and are
Must grow in me, that I may grow as vast,—
And meet as they, my ruin at the last!

Meph. O, but believe me, I who have
Gnawed this hard crust for many a thousand year,
That from the cradle to the bier
No man digests the ancient leaven!
Believe me when I tell you that this Whole
Is made but for a God! He knows His way
In the eternal radiance: Us he puts
In darkness, gives You only night and day.
Faust. Ah, but I will!
Meph. Yes, so you say!
But have you ever thought
Art's long and life is short? . . .

. . . . . .

Faust. What am I then, unless I can
Reach the full glory of a man
Which every sense is thirsting for?
Meph. You are exactly—what you are.
Wear what big wigs and take what stilts you pleased,
You'd still remain,—precisely what you are.
Faust. That's true enough. I know that all in vain
All treasures of man's spirit I have seized,
For in the end, when I sit down again,
There's no new power, not an inch more in height,
I am no nearer to the Infinite." (1744–1815.)[1]

When he is alone, Mephistopheles shows his hand quite plainly. "Go," he says to the retreating Faust,

"Go, turn your back on knowledge and despise
Reason, the very strength of humankind!
Go, let my dazzling magic make you blind
And feed your soul upon the soul of lies!
So shall I have you fast!

. . . . . .

Now will I drag him through life's whirling roar
And through the barren and the meaningless.
I'll have him writhe and freeze and clutch at me.
Hungry and thirsty, he shall feel the fullness

---

[1] At line 1770, it may be noticed—

" And I must gather into my own breast
The scattered griefs and glories of mankind "—

we rejoin the part already written by Goethe for the version published in 1790 as the *Fragment*.

Of meat and drink upon his lips in vain,
In vain one drop of health shall he implore,
Though he had never sold himself to me,
He's lost for evermore!" (1851–67.)

After the compact, Mephistopheles at once takes the lead. He begins by corrupting a freshman among Faust's scholars, a scene that belonged to the *Urfaust*, where it followed, without explanation, the scene with Wagner. But even while setting about this, Mephistopheles shows, when he sneers at pedantry, that he remembers the nature of real knowledge:

"Yes, they will teach you every day
That what you practised straight away
And thought as simple as meat and drink
Is not so easy as you think.
You must count your steps, if you'd do as you ought.
It's true the fabric of all thought
Is like a weaver's artistry
Where one thrust moves a thousand threads;
Forward and back the shuttles fly,
Unseen the lines dart as he treads
And one stroke bids a million blend.
Comes the philosopher, and he
Points you out that so it must be:—
'The First was thus, and the Second thus,
And so the Third and Fourth are thus;
And without the Second and First, you see,
The Third and the Fourth could never be!'
The students listen and believe,
But none the better do they weave.
When he wants to learn why a creature lives,
He starts by driving the spirit out:
Then he holds the parts in his hand, no doubt;
He has only lost what made it live." (1918–39.)

Mephistopheles, however, employs his own wit (and Goethe's own early contempt for academic futilities) merely to discredit all learning. Logic, natural science, metaphysics, law, theology, all in turn are dismissed, and

medicine finally selected, only because it gives such excellent opportunities for seduction. The freshman is delighted with this way out; he welcomes the Mephistophelian divorce between reason and action:

"*Meph.* All theory, my dear young friend, is gray,
And green the golden tree of life." (2038–9.)

He accepts with reverence the motto of indiscriminate experiment in life:

"Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."

But Mephistopheles, as he gives it and the youth goes out, reserves a comment of his own:

"Follow the ancient saw of my good cousin the Snake,
And I warrant your likeness to God will make your own heart ache!" (2049–50.)

We shall meet this student again, like Wagner, in the Second Part. Meanwhile Mephistopheles in tempting him has only been keeping his hand in for his bigger quarry, Faust, and these two now set out on their adventures.

CHAPTER VII

GRETCHEN

The first adventure is with the drunken party at Leipsic in Auerbach's Cellar, where the Devil, disguised as a fine gentleman, draws wine from the wood of the table and mesmerises the drinkers. This scene also belonged to the *Urfaust*, and is the only parallel in the play to the rough fun in the original legend, as we find it still in Marlowe. Many of these old stories may be derived from misunderstood facts of hypnotism. And it is likely that the reading of them helped Goethe to his conception of magic as a power that acts through imagination.[1] But when he recast the episode, as he did for the *Fragment* of 1790, putting it all into verse at some cost to its original vigour, he appears to have felt that it contributed little to his full-grown idea. His Faust must be caught by subtler bait. In the later version Faust, who was leader in the first, now leaves everything to Mephistopheles, and does not utter a word himself after the initial greeting except to say that he would like to leave.

Far more important in the development of the drama is the episode of the "Witch's Cauldron" that follows. This, we know, was written in Rome (probably during the

[1] Compare what Goethe says about Witches and Magnetism in the letter from Rome to Frau von Stein, usually dated 4th August 1787 and certainly written about that time.

summer of 1787), and it reflects Goethe's revulsion alike from the superstitions of the north and the "filthy cookery" of sensualism. It is brilliantly written for his purpose, a medley of indecency and absurdity with an underlying sense of perverted power in the Witch, the perversion of a force beyond the scope of "the Spirit who Denies." It is she who gives Faust a vision of woman's beauty. It is she, not the devil, who brews the potion that gives him back the fire of youth and passion. Mephistopheles cannot make this drug, though he knows how it should be made. His lust, until the fiery roses rain on him at the end, is always cold. Faust hates the magic of the Witch, even while he succumbs to it. He asks Mephistopheles if there is no other way to win back youth. And Mephistopheles, who knows that his good advice will not be taken, replies, "Certainly. You can live and work on the land, and so keep you young till you are eighty." Of course such a life is impossible for Faust, and he yields to the Witch. But even there, it is beauty seen through imagination that allures him most: even after drinking the potion, he can hardly tear himself away from the enchanted mirror. But Mephistopheles offers something more practical:

> "Come, come! you'll find, in flesh and blood,
> A piece of pure perfection, when you please.
> (*To himself.*)
> Now that he's got the drink inside him
> He'll make a Helen of every girl he sees."
>
> (2601–04.)

The "Witch's Cauldron" leads straight up to the Gretchen-story, henceforth the main interest of the First Part. The bulk of this tragedy was in the *Urfaust*, and reappears in the final form substantially unchanged. The first meeting with Gretchen, a chance meeting out-

side a church, follows immediately on the scene with the Witch, and no doubt Goethe intended to show thereby how large a part was played, in the passion of Faust, by lust and illusion. But these were not the only elements. Faust's heart and mind as well as his desire are stirred; and at the end of his long pilgrimage his first love waits to complete his redemption.

The moment Faust meets the girl he wants to possess her and orders Mephistopheles to secure her for him that very night. Mephistopheles knows it is impossible. She is too innocent: "Over her I have no power." It will take at least a fortnight even to get a chance. He tries to persuade Faust that the delay will only make the game more amusing; but Faust is furious: "I've appetite enough." He wants her now, at once, and it is with reluctance and ill-will that he assents to the slower siege.

All this we expect from the man who has drunk the potion. But it is important for the whole meaning of the drama to observe that this does not exhaust Faust's feeling. As he gets to know Gretchen he grows also to love her. Something of this, indeed, appears at the outset: he is only the more charmed for her curt refusal of his impertinent advances. Again, when Mephistopheles in her absence takes him into her orderly little room, the spirit of the place so works on him that for a moment he sends the devil away. And the ballad "There was a King in Thule," sung to herself by Gretchen immediately afterwards, seems to respond with the note of faithful love that makes the old King of the song so endearing a figure.

As the story advances, both love and lust increase in complexity, and the result is self-torment and self-delusion, with Mephistopheles throughout playing the part of the accomplished cynic. Faust is indignant and

genuinely so, but in the end he gives way to a desire that for all his protests is none the less too strong for him. This must be read in the original detail to be appreciated. But since the scenes are very loosely connected, though each masterly in itself, it may well be to say a word about the bare facts that underlie the situation. When Gretchen yields and consents to admit Faust at night, the question arises how to prevent her mother knowing. Faust suggests a sleeping-draught and Gretchen agrees to give it. The draught kills the mother, and it is sometimes thought that such was Faust's intention. But there is no reason to suppose this, and it attributes to Faust a cold-blooded murder alien to his character, and which, if Goethe had intended, he could not have left in ambiguity. Another point: this night on which the lovers lie together is the only one. That is supported by the plea of the Penitents at the close of the Second Part when they urge that Gretchen had forgotten herself "only once." A long and secret intrigue against her conscience would be contrary to Gretchen's nature. And to that of Faust also. He was ardent, self-deceived and weak—as Goethe himself had often been—but he did not choose deliberately the ruin of Gretchen. The working-over of the scenes, after the tragedy was taken up again in Italy, somewhat obscures this, and may make him seem worse than Goethe intended. Even in the completed drama there is only one scene where Faust faces what seduction may mean to a girl of Gretchen's upbringing, and that is the Forest-scene, where Mephistopheles undermines his resistance. Now nothing of this scene was in the first draft except its final outburst of self-hatred, beginning "How can I lie in bliss upon her breast?" And this outburst, set between curt gibes from Mephistopheles, came not *before* but *after* the

seduction, on the night of Faust's miserable return, when, unknown to him, her brother Valentine was to be on guard. Such a cry of remorse, coming thus, showed that it was not until too late that Faust realised he had lured Gretchen into what she believed to be mortal sin.

The Forest-scene, as it now stands, was written at least fifteen years later,[1] and there was, in fact, no place completely suitable for it in the old drama. In the *Fragment* of 1790, Goethe put it after the seduction. But he was not content with this arrangement (which is in fact jarring), presumably because he felt that the general tone of the scene and the calmness of its opening naturally imply that Gretchen is still untouched. At any rate he moved it, and when the First Act was published entire in 1808, he put it in its present place, shortly before the Garden-scene where the tryst is made for the night.

But, so placed, it shows Faust as having been fully conscious of what he was going to do, and what it would involve. Goethe, however, may not have intended this change of note. He often inserted in a work material that he thought good in itself without sufficient regard for its influence on the whole. This was a chronic defect in his craftmanship, and the way in which *Faust* was built up, with the long gaps between the writing of different passages and his habit of putting even into his dramatic poetry his own emotions at the time, made the drama peculiarly liable to this kind of oscillation. But, whatever may be thought about its effect on the play, the Forest-scene itself is strong and subtle and also of great biographical interest. Faust is imagined as alone at first, in the woods, having fled from the dangers of his passion, and drawing new life from a communion with

[1] See above, Chap. III. And the Appendix.

Nature now made possible for him through the finer elements in that very feeling, until he is tempted back again by Mephistopheles. Much of this corresponds with Goethe's own flight from the woman he loved that he might escape the stress of unappeased desire; with his zest for discovery and his joy in Nature, a zest and a joy which, added to his study of art and the antique, kept him for a year secluded in Italy, apart from women; and, finally, with the insistent need that led him back to them, and yet left him dissatisfied. But Goethe is not all of Faust, nor only Faust; he is also Mephistopheles, and he is also the poet who stands above both and is working out, in his life as in his art, his own larger synthesis. Even in the opening of Faust's soliloquy where he is at rest, having for the moment mastered his desires, there is an arrogance in his attitude to Nature that Goethe had long outgrown. Faust regards himself now as a monarch in her realm and believes that the Earth-Spirit has given him, after all, everything that he had longed for. He can meet Nature now face to face and fathom her heart (a vanity on which Mephistopheles seizes afterwards to point his sarcasms):

"Forest and Cavern.

Faust (*alone*).

O, thou great Spirit, thou hast given me all,
All that I asked for. Surely not in vain
I saw thy face turned on me through the fire:
Thou gavest me the realm of Nature's glory
To be my realm, and power to feel her power,
Delight in her delight, not watch her only
Cold and aloof. Thou sufferest me to gaze
Deep in her breast, as into a friend's heart.
Thou bringest all the ranks of living things
Before my eyes, teaching me how to find
My brothers in calm woods, in air and water.
And when the storm sweeps roaring through the forest

Till giant pine-trees, crashing, tear to the ground
Their neighbours' towering branches, while the fall
Echoes in hollow thunder through the hills,
Thou guidest me to some sure cavern, showest
My own self unto me, and in my breast
Strange secret wonders open. The pure moon
Rises to fill the sky with gentleness;
By the cliff-wall and from the dewy brake
The silvery phantoms of the ancient world
Hover to soothe me, slackening the keen strain
To note and learn.

Ah, but I find no perfect joy for man:
I know it now. Thou gavest, with this rapture
That brings me near and nearer to the gods,
The comrade I can do without no more,
Though still he lowers me before myself,
Light, cold and shameless, and with one word breathed
Turns all thy gifts to nothing." (3217–46.)

Mephistopheles himself comes in almost at once, and under his merciless analysis, his taunts and his allurements Faust gives way, consciously and completely, and goes back, though he hates himself for doing so.

The Forest-scene is followed by the lovely lyric "Meine Ruh ist hin," sung by Gretchen alone as she works restlessly at her spinning-wheel, longing desperately for her lover. This lyric was already in the *Urfaust*, and led on there, as it does now, to the final meeting of the lovers in the garden. And in that meeting, it is clear, both the good and the bad in Faust's passion come to a climax. His declaration of faith and hope is Goethe's own, and the poet must have meant it to be significant that the Faust whom we saw despairing at the outset should make it now, at the crisis of his love for Gretchen. She has opened the world for him once more. When she asks him if he believes in God and the vagueness of his answer alarms her, he reassures her by an outpouring, not only of tenderness for herself, but of confidence in

the spiritual nature of the universe. The whole scene is significant and highly characteristic of Gretchen as well as of Faust:

"*Marg.* Promise me, Heinrich!
Faust. All that's in my power!
Marg. Then tell me, are you a religious man?
You are so good, good from the heart, and yet,
I do not know, I often think you doubt.
Faust. Hush, hush, my child! One thing you know, I love you!
And I would die, yes, die for those I love.
Nothing would make me rob them of their faith.
Marg. That's not enough! We must believe!
Faust. Must? Must?
Marg. Could I but influence you! Alas, you have
No reverence for the blessed Sacraments.
Faust. Reverence I have.
Marg. But no desire for them:
You have not been to Mass for many a day,
Nor to Confession. Do you believe in God?
Faust. My darling, who dare say
That he believes in God?
Ask the priests and the wise,
And what is there but mockery
In all their long replies?
Marg. Then you do not believe?
Faust. Mistake me not, my loveliest!
Who dare name His name
And say 'I believe in Him?'
Who dare silence the heart
And say 'I believe Him not?'
The All-enfolder,
The All-upholder,
Does He not hold, uphold
You and me and Himself?
Is not the sky arched overhead
And the earth set firm at our feet?
Do not the great stars rise,
Look down with immortal love?
And I look into your eyes?
Does not the whole world press
Into your heart and brain,
And the eternal secret float

Round you, hidden and plain?
Fill to the brim your soul
From that full blessedness,
Then name it as you will
Love, Rapture, God!
I have no name for it, none!
The heart is all, and the name
Nothing but clamour and smoke
Clouding the glow of the sky." (3414–58.)

But the next moment Faust is lulling the girl's scruples with all his unconscious sophism. She dreads Mephistopheles, as she says herself, from the bottom of her heart; he seems to kill her soul. But Faust insists that his companion can do her no harm. She is in an agony of shame at the thought of her mother finding her lover and herself together at night, but he proposes the sleeping-draught to keep everything quiet. When she distrusts the potion he appeals to her confidence in his care. And all the time he now convinces himself that the devil has nothing to do with his passion. He answers Mephistopheles' cynicism with fierce denials, though the other has the last word:

"*Meph.* Well, well, to-night . . . !
Faust. What's that to you?
Meph. Aha, I have my pleasure in it, too."

The self-deception is outrageous, but far from unnatural, even when the Forest-scene comes before this. But the movement in Faust's mind was clearer in the first draft. There also the reaction of remorse that follows was unmistakable in Faust himself as well as in Gretchen. The night of love is never described, but in the next scenes, where Gretchen is drawing water at the well or kneeling before the picture of the Virgin, she is already plunged in despair. There are no stage directions to indicate what the lapse of time may be. But

Faust is absent. He is paralysed at the thought of what he has done and can hardly dare to face her. When his desire does drag him back it is with "night in his heart":

"How can I lie in bliss upon her breast?
What is that shuddering, glowing heaven to me?
It hides not her soul's agony!
Am I not vile, a monster, who must flee
Cast out from home for ever, without rest,
A rock-bound torrent storming through the wild
Devouring all,
Until the last sheer fall
In the abyss below?
And there was she, an unawakened child,
On the green alp, safe in her tiny cot,
Her young life, and her home, and little world,—
And I, accursed of God and damned,
Was not content
When I had clutched the rocks and rent
The cliffs, and hurled
Their fragments to the void!
I have destroyed
Her, and her peace! This was the price it cost,
This was your payment, Hell!
Now, Devil, come with me,
Make short work of our misery:
What must be done, be it done speedily,
Her doom fall on my head and both of us be lost!"[1]

This outburst, so moving in its original place, was, as we saw, in the end transposed (to the close of the Forest-scene), but Faust's behaviour after the night of love can only be made intelligible if we realise that Goethe counted on our understanding that this kind of remorse is what he would inevitably feel.

In both the original and the final form, on the night of his return Gretchen's brother, Valentine, unknown to

[1] 3345 f. In the final version the second line was made clearer in grammar but weaker as poetry, and our translation follows the first form.

him, is watching at her door. Valentine has come back for his mother's funeral, to find his sister dishonoured. This scene, already planned in the *Urfaust*, and partly written, ends with a duel provoked by Valentine, and his death at the hands of Faust, whose rapier is directed by Mephistopheles.

It is plain that the killing of Valentine is in self-defence and unexpected; and the part played here by Mephistopheles shows that he can represent not only evil desire, but also that element of accident in the doings of men which, as it were, responds to or provokes evil.[1] To conceive an individual as entirely his own star is not the way of the greatest dramatists: somehow they make their terms with accident, as all of us must in life. It is an accident, for instance, that successes crowd upon Macbeth at the moment when the old king is put in his power, an accident but for which the sleeping devil of ambition might never have awaked to murder. This interplay of inner and outer Shakespeare has marked by the creation of the Weird Women, beings who are at once in the secrets of circumstance and cunning to corrupt the heart. Goethe followed the Shakespearean model: Mephistopheles has a hand of his own in the slaying of Valentine, and Faust, if he is ever to get free, must fight not only himself but his environment. He has now to face the fact that a man is lying mortally wounded in the night at Gretchen's door, and that he is responsible for it and known to be. His return now means, if discovered, not merely his own arrest, but her public disgrace. Every feeling that held him back is heightened, and the old temptation

[1] Goethe expressed more than once his sense of the mystery in events and how "the dæmonic" was at work in them. See, for example, his words to Boisserée and to Eckermann (*Goethes Gespräche*, 5th October 1815, 24th March 1829).

recurs to escape from the actual by flight. Thereby Faust sinks to his lowest depth. He leaves Gretchen all alone (though he is not aware of her condition) and lets himself be carried where her fate can be hidden from him.

Meanwhile her wretchedness begins to verge on madness as appears from the scene in the church, the last scene included in the *Fragment*. In the *Urfaust* it came earlier, just before the death of Valentine, and the occasion was the funeral of the mother with all the relatives assembled. Goethe made hardly any change in the writing when he transposed the scene, and it should be observed that the Spirit intensifying the girl's remorse is, and was in the *Urfaust*, an Evil Spirit. Goethe's distrust of remorse and his knowledge of its power to madden or to paralyse were marked in him from the very beginning of his work as a poet.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WALPURGIS-NIGHT AND THE PRISON

Somewhere about this point, after the death of Valentine, Goethe, it may be presumed, had always intended to put an episode showing Faust carried away by Mephistopheles into wild experiences, since the first draft makes him reproach the devil for the "loathsome pleasures" which hid Margaret's "growing wretchedness" from him. But it was not till 1799 that the great scene was begun, describing the Walpurgisnacht, the Witches' Sabbath on the night of Mayday, supposed to occur on the heights of the Brocken, a year after the encounter with Valentine.[1] The Sabbath is a riot of all the cravings and ambitions in human life, provided they are heartless, the "gala-day" of Mephistopheles; and the nearest approach to its effect in English may be found in a poem probably inspired by it, Shelley's "Triumph of Life," where the cruel dance carries in its train

"lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist."

The key here is given by Goethe himself. He spoke, to

[1] The date seems clear from a comparison of the references in "A Gloomy Day" and in the Valentine-scene. The Walpurgisnacht was a yearly festival, and in the Valentine-scene Mephistopheles speaks of it as due in two days, while, from what Faust says on the return about Gretchen's "long wanderings," it is obvious that the Sabbath at which he is present occurs much later than the seduction.

a friend, about his Walpurgis-Sack as the hole where he thrust all "the Stygian plagues" that drove him wild, and he was ready to include himself:

"Every paper that falls into my Walpurgis-Sack falls into Hell, and from Hell, as you are aware, there is no escape. Yes, and if ever I should decide—and to-day I am half-inclined for it—to take myself by the neck and pitch myself into the Bag—by God! what stays down, down it stays, and never comes up again, though it were I myself! That's the iron law of my Walpurgis-Sack, the hellish constitution I have given to it. Down there a quenchless fire is blazing; and when once its jaws open, it spares neither friend nor foe. I warn every man not to go too near it: I am afraid of it myself." [1]

The carnival of the witches, like the "Triumph" in Shelley's poem, is set in the most romantic scenery, and the whole has been translated by Shelley himself, who being the poet he was, has caught the poetry of it as no one else is likely to do. But he made no attempt to catch the dry tone of Mephistopheles, and his imperfect acquaintance with German sometimes misled him. Therefore, in the few passages here quoted, we have not used his translation except for a line or two.

It is in this scene that Faust comes nearest to that desperate acceptance of mere sensual tumult which Mephistopheles is working for. Once indeed the devil puts to him the fateful question. But not even now does Faust really succumb. His passion for knowledge is still active; he objects when Mephistopheles tries to drag him into a corner:

"I would far rather be
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke
Where the blind million rush impetuously

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, No. 3097. From Falk's recollections.

To meet the Evil One! There might I solve
Many a riddle!

Meph. Yes, and only find
Many another left unsolved behind."

Mephistopheles insists on his comfortable little club:

"Let the great world go roaring on its way,
We'll stay at home in peace and watch the play,
And make, as men have made since man was known,
In the big world a wee world of our own.
Young witches there! Stark naked, goodness knows!
And old ones, too, with wit to wear some clothes.
Come, do be friendly just for once! Now, please!
Here's the best sport with the most perfect ease.
The band tunes up—damn it, the cursed jangle!
One learns to bear it though, in all this tangle.
Come, come with me! It must be so:
I'll take you in, and let you see the show,
Bind you afresh, and closer still to me."

They enter the circle, but it seems no longer little:

"Look there, my friend! Is that a tiny place?
You cannot see the end of the huge space:
Look at the life! So cheerful and so free!
A hundred bonfires blazing on the ground,
And all that heart can wish for all around.
They dance, and chatter, drink and cook and kiss:
Say, what is better in the world than this?"

(4037–59.)

Mephistopheles has come near putting the question on which everything turns, and it is, in fact, the moment of his greatest power over Faust. But Faust answers with a sneer of his own:

"And what's your part here? Conjuror or Devil?"

Nevertheless, he joins the mad dance that mocks his true love. Then suddenly, to Mephistopheles' amazement, he leaves his partner:

"*Meph.* Why did you let that pretty young thing go
Who sang her dancing song, so kind and gay?

Faust. Why? Even as she smiled and sang
Out of her mouth a red mouse sprang.
Meph. Well, that's no reason you should run away.
Be thankful that it wasn't common gray.
Why stick at trifles when the fun is free?
Faust. And then I saw . . .
Meph. Saw what?
Faust. Mephisto, can you see
Out there, far off, alone, a pale sweet girl?
Slowly she moves, apart from all this whirl:
Her steps drag; are there shackles on her feet?
It cannot be, and yet, and yet
She looks to me like Margaret." (4176–88.)

The spell is broken. Mephistopheles tries in vain to persuade Faust that what he sees is illusion or worse, a Gorgon to turn men to stone. Faust knows Gretchen. Only her eyes look dead, and there is a narrow red line round her neck. Quite so, cries Mephistopheles, and what's more, she can take off her head and carry it under her arm! Always your old passion for illusion! And he leads him away to a new distraction.

At this point it is difficult to judge exactly of Goethe's original intention. We know that he planned a great scene where Satan was to hold his court. That scene was never written, and instead he inserted the "Intermezzo" of light epigrams called *A Walpurgis Night's Dream or The Golden Wedding of Oberon and Titania.* The verses were originally written for another purpose, but Goethe put them here, in the form of an entertainment supplied by the servitors of Mephistopheles to divert Faust's attention. He may have meant to indicate how the trivial affairs of life mask the development of a tragedy and prevent help from arriving until too late. But at best the device is trivial, and the loss of the great unwritten scene cannot be thus compensated.

Abruptly after the Intermezzo we find Faust confront-

ing Mephistopheles alone in daylight, among open fields far from the Brocken. Faust knows now that Gretchen has borne a child, has drowned it, and is in prison awaiting execution. We are not told how he has learned this, but the vision of Gretchen must have led to it. He is mad with despair and rage. Yet even now his sentimentality and weakness come out in the turgid and melodramatic reproaches he heaps on Mephistopheles as the author of it all. The one redeeming point is that he forces Mephistopheles to carry him straight to the prison. For a moment we catch a glimpse of them riding through the air. As they pass the place of execution they see spirits hovering and strewing flowers to hallow it. This little touch is a characteristic device of Goethe's to lift the burden of tragedy. He could not long endure it unrelieved and naked, as Webster, for instance, could. When he recast his early draft he rewrote in verse the final scene, originally written in prose, and he gave his reasons to Schiller: "Some of the tragic parts were written in prose, and their naturalness and force, taken in connection with the rest, make them quite unbearable. I am trying, therefore, to put them into verse, so that the idea should glimmer, as it were, through a veil, and the direct working of the appalling matter be softened." [1] The change, in point of fact, does not so much lessen the poignancy of the scene as clothe it in a dignity and beauty that make it endurable. That Goethe was able to do this after more than twenty years, shows how strong his grip was on the essentials of the situation.[2] In both versions it will be

[1] Letter to Schiller, 5th May 1798.

[2] Readers interested in the details of a great writer's methods will find the two versions given in the Jubiläums-Ausgabe, vol. 13, as well as in the Insel-Verlag. The alterations are few, for the original prose was rhythmical, but they are full of interest and almost always for the better.

noted that what finally determined Gretchen to stay and meet her doom was the appearance of Mephistopheles. She will have nothing to do with a scheme of escape depending upon him. This time she will not stifle her conscience, even for Faust. At the sight of Mephistopheles on the threshold she shudders at her lover and appeals from the safety that they offer her to the judgment of God. To stay means her execution, as she knew it must. Mephistopheles can see no further than this. To him the judgment that she accepts means nothing but the scaffold. To Goethe it meant her salvation. And in the final version he could not be content without adding the "voice from above" crying that she is saved, a voice that may be thought unnecessary for the dramatic effect at the moment, but that points forward to the close of the Second Part. Faust cannot follow her to the scaffold. He is gripped by Mephistopheles, and the First Part ends with what seems the final separation of the lovers.

The pity and terror and beauty of the scene are so strongly rooted in the quality of Gretchen's character that they can be felt even through a translation. We give the close, where her madness clears and she recognises Faust:

"*Marg.* And is it you? And is it really you?
Faust. Yes! Come with me!
Marg. You have unlocked my chain,
You take me to your bosom once again.
How is it that you do not shrink from me?
Do you know, my friend, whom you set free?
Faust. O, come with me! Midnight is passing. Come!
Marg. I have killed my mother,
And drowned my child.
Was it not sent to us for one another?
To both of us—You here? I cannot grasp it.
Give me your hand!—O, what has made it wet?
Wipe it, I pray! I think there's blood on it.

My God, what have you done?
Put up the dagger, put it up, I beg!
Faust. Hush, hush, and let the past be past,
Or I shall die!
Marg. No, you must live, live on when we are gone.
And I will tell you how the graves must lie,
For you must care for them to-morrow:
The best place for my mother,
And next to her my brother,
With me apart, but not too far away!
And the little one at my right breast.
There I shall rest,
And no one else shall lie beside me there.
Ah, love, to nestle at your side,
How sweet it was, how beautiful and dear!
But I can never have it any more.
It seems as though I tried
To reach you, and you thrust me back and back!
And yet you look, you are so kind, so good.
Faust. O, if you know me now, come! Far from here!
Marg. Out there?
Faust. To freedom.
Marg. If the grave is there,
If death is waiting, yes!
From here I go
To the long rest of my last bed,
And not one step beyond. No, no——
And you are going now? O, Heinrich, if I could!
Faust. You can. The door is open. If you would!
Marg. I dare not go. There is no hope for me.
What could I do?
They lie in wait for me.
It is so hard to beg one's bread,
And with an evil conscience, too.
It is so hard, alone, in a strange land.
And they would take me, too, at last.
Faust. I'll stay with you.
Marg. Quick, quick!
Your child! Save your poor child! Run fast!
Along the brook,
Over the bridge, to the wood beyond!
On the left hand, by the plank, in the pond!
Only be quick!

It has risen, look!
It is struggling yet,
Save it, save it!

Faust. O, hush! Be calm! One step, and the danger's past!

Marg. If we were only beyond the hill!
My mother is there, she sits on a stone,
And I turn cold with dread.
My mother is there, she sits alone,
Sits and wags her head:
She blinks not, she stirs not, her head hangs heavily.
She slept so long, all through the night,
She will not wake,—never wake again.
She slept for our delight.
Ah, we were happy then!

Faust. My words are idle, my tears can do no good.
I must use force to set you free.

Marg. No, no! Not that!
No violence!
Clutch me not thus as though to murder me!
Once I gave all I had to please my dear.

Faust. The day is breaking! Darling! The sky is gray.

Marg. Day! It is day! Yes, my last day draws near;
It should have been my wedding-day.
Let no one know
That you have been with Margaret before.
Alas for my wreath! What has been, has been.
We shall see each other once more,
But not in the dance, ah no!
In the crowd
That gathers and gathers without a sound;
They fill the square, they cover the ground.
The staff is broken, the bell rings loud!
And I am seized and bound,
For the red block, the block where I am led.
Now every neck can feel
The quiver of the steel
That quivers for my head.
And all is silent, silent as the dead.

Faust. O, that I never had been born!

Meph. (*appearing at the door*).
Fly! Or be lost! It is close on dawn.
What means your delay?
Will you chatter for ever?

My horses shiver:
The sky grows gray.
Marg. What's that, sprung from the ground, that face?
He, it is he!
Send him away!
How comes he here, in the holy place?
He has come for me!
Faust. You shall not die!
Marg. Judgment of God! I yield myself to Thee!
Meph. Come, or I leave you both to perish here!
Marg. My Father, I am Thine! Stretch forth Thy arm,
Bid Thy pure angels keep me safe from harm!
Heinrich, I dread you now.
Meph. Judged! She is judged!
A Voice (*from the sky*).
Saved, saved!
Meph. Faust, follow me!
(*He disappears with Faust.*)
Voice (*from within, dying away*).
Heinrich, Heinrich!" (4501–end.)

CHAPTER IX

THE OPENING OF THE SECOND PART

In passing from the First to the Second Part we enter a new atmosphere. The First, begun in youth, was completed, so far as we can tell, before Goethe was much more than fifty, while the bulk of the Second, though conceived earlier, was not composed until the last decade of his life with the exception of two passages, one certainly and the other probably, written when he was finishing the First, namely the beginning of the *Helena* and the death-scene of Faust himself.[1] The change of tone corresponds with the difference in age. The First is fiery, spontaneous and poetical almost throughout. The Second, though full of beauty, is, on the whole, more abstract, less dramatic and less exciting. Goethe himself knew this, but he did not regard it as a disadvantage. "It is higher, broader, clearer, less passionate," he said,[2] "the man who has not looked about him a little will never know what to make of it." He knew that it would often be considered uninteresting, and said so. This was one reason why he would not publish the whole in his lifetime. But he did not admit that it deserved to be so considered. He told one friend that he had "hidden many secrets in it," and said to another that just because he had put so much

[1] See Appendix.

[2] To Eckermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, 15th February 1831.

into it he was sure that after his death his countrymen would call it the dullest of all his works.[1]

It is idle to argue about dullness: every reader will have his own opinion, and the dullness will not always be the poet's. But there is another criticism that touches more closely on Goethe's conception. As we have seen, he claimed that the plan of the whole had been always in his head through all the distractions and delays of the execution: for example, he insisted, in the long conversation recorded so complacently in 1806 by the egregious Luden,[2] that the *Fragment* (all that was then published) was only part of a whole already existing in the poet's mind. Later, he said to Eckermann (6th December 1829), that he had been thinking over the Second Part for fifty years, and he added, "it may be an advantage that I have not written it down till now, when my knowledge of the world is so much clearer." Further, we know from another statement[3] that one theme which he intended should run through the whole was that of an "activity" in Faust which never dies, but grows.

But is that theme really carried through? What does Faust make of love in the First Part? While, in the Second, the development of his nature is so loosely indicated that a critic as acute and philosophic as Mr Santayana can maintain that in fact Faust learned nothing: "The will to live in Faust is not the least educated by his experiences. It changes its objects because it must; the passions of youth yield to those of age; and among all the illusions of his life, the most fatuous is the illusion of progress."[4]

[1] *Goethes Gespräche.* To Jenny von Pappenheim [3031]; and to Count Stroganoff [3010].

[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 19th August 1806.

[3] To Eckermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, 6th June 1831.

[4] *Three Philosophic Poets.*

This judgment may, at first sight, be very well sustained. In the Second Part Faust is constantly passive when he should be active. Mephistopheles has to invent and to guide: devise the paper money, help in the creation of the Homunculus, and direct the battle for the Emperor. The contention that Faust only storms vaguely and ineffectively through life can be very plausibly defended. That he should be and remain imperfect is part, no doubt, of Goethe's idea; and it is even expressed by Faust at the end of his life.[1] A man does not sell himself to the devil for nothing. On the other hand the idea that he has learned nothing is the last which Goethe intended to convey. And in so far as he does so he has failed in his own purpose. Conscious, perhaps, of this possibility, he fell back on the breadth and variety of the whole. "The only thing of importance," he said to Eckermann,[2] "in such a composition is that the single masses should be clear and significant, while the whole should be incommensurable, and for that very reason should lure men, like an unsolved problem, to study it again and again." And he confessed freely that it raised more problems than it solved.

The loose connection of the "single masses" is illustrated by the fact that the *Helena* was published separately in 1827, and the greater part of the First Act[3] separately in 1828. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Goethe intended to show a development in Faust and there are two important stages where he has really shown it. One is in the pursuit and capture of Helen, the spirit of classical beauty, and the union of that spirit with the

[1] 11,433 ff.

[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 13th February 1831.

[3] Up to l. 6036, just before the announcement concerning the paper money.

romantic. The other is in the reclaiming of the land from the sea at the close. Mr Santayana speaks with a touch of contempt about "simple-minded commentators" who dignify this enterprise "with the name of altruism and of living for others." But we cannot really doubt that it was Goethe's deliberate intention, worked up to throughout the whole drama, to show Faust as reaching through that enterprise the highest point in his growth, not merely as making an excursus into a new region of affairs, while remaining himself the same sentimental, egoistic, incurably unphilosophic figure. There remains, it is true, egoism in his nature to the last and Goethe attempts no impossible conversion. But to say that there is nothing else, and that Faust's final activity is only "one more arbitrary passion, one more selfish illusion" is to read into Goethe's work what he did not mean to put there, and what could hardly be found there save by one fundamentally sceptical, as Goethe never was, of all human action. It is Goethe really, not Faust, whom Mr Santayana is criticising for being an unteachable romantic. Into that controversy we need not enter here: our task is to expound Goethe's attitude. Hopeful he always was, and with hope the Second Part begins, as it ends.

After the tragedy of Gretchen some considerable time —how much we are not told—is supposed to have elapsed; and Faust comes back to new life among the mountains in the spring. The tone of this opening scene is characteristic. Goethe, as one would anticipate, lays no further stress on Faust's remorse. Faust has to live; and "how could man live at all if he did not give absolution every night to himself and all his brothers?"[1] Repentance, indeed, Goethe always valued, in its proper

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 6th December 1825.

meaning "change of mind," and on repentance the whole structure of the Second Part depends. But repentance means advance, and advance, if it needs the divine art that is something more than memory, needs also the saving grace of oblivion. So St Paul urges his converts to forget "the things that are behind," and Dante gives to his redeemed the double draught of Lethe and Eunoe. "With every breath we draw," the old Goethe wrote to Zelter,[1] "let an ethereal stream of oblivion penetrate our whole being, so that we may not remember our joys too much, and may remember our sorrows hardly at all. This high gift of the Gods I learnt long ago to value, employ and increase."

It was in this temper that he conceived the opening of the Second Part, "as though everything were covered with a cloak of pardon," to quote his own words.[2] "If we remember," he went on, "the close of the last Act and the fearful suffering that swept down on Gretchen, suffering that must also have shaken the soul of Faust to its foundations, it will be seen that I had no choice but to do as I have done, leave my hero utterly paralysed and, as it were, annihilated, and then, out of this apparent death, restore him to a new life. And for that restoration I needed the help of the pitying, powerful Spirits that our ancestors spoke of as elves and fairies. They are all compassion and infinite tenderness. They do not sit in judgment; they do not ask if the pain is deserved or not, as a human judge might ask. The fairies do not trouble about that at all. It is all one to them whether the unhappy man is a saint or a sinner sunk in wickedness; holy or sinful, they are sorry for him; they continue to soothe and comfort and reconcile; they have no higher

[1] 15th February 1830.

[2] To Eckermann in 1829 or 1830, *Goethes Gespräche* [2881].

aim than to make him forget in deep sweet slumber the horrors that he has lived through; 'First sprinkle him with dew from Lethe drawn.'"

In the same spirit, when Goethe wrote his *Last Word for Youthful Poets* and told them to ask about every poem they produced whether it embodied a real experience and also an experience that had "brought them further," he added: "You get no further if you are always bewailing a love lost to you by absence, or by unfaithfulness, or by death. That is no use at all. . . . Lay hold of the advancing hours and test yourself by facts: it is thus we learn at each moment whether we are living at the time, and find out, when we look back at the past, whether we were living then." [1] "In every great separation," he wrote for himself, "there lies a germ of madness. What we must do is to guard against nursing this and letting it come to life." [2] At the year's end he would say to his friends, "After all, the only thing that matters is to go on!"

Faust's spirit, then, is to be delivered from the horror of Gretchen's fate. But, of course, that does not mean that he is to forget her. On the contrary, her influence is to work in him permanently for Good. From the early drafts of the Second Part it is clear that Goethe had thought of showing this by introducing visions of her at various crises in Faust's development; for example, when he lies prostrate after the adventure to the Mothers in search of Helen, and when he returns from Greece and conceives the idea of reclaiming the land. Goethe abandoned these devices, probably as too operatic. But the motive of Gretchen's influence, which is only made explicit in the last Act, must be conceived

[1] *Noch ein Wort für junge Dichter*, J.-A., vol. 38, p. 325.
[2] *Ital. Reise*, 22nd March 1788.

to be present throughout the whole Second Part. Faust never again falls into the toils of lust. When he awakens in the opening scene, "there is no longer any trace," so Goethe wrote in an account destined for *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, "of his former slavery to sense and passion." [1] His pursuit of Helen later is but a symbol of the artist's pursuit after an ideal beauty in life.

This opening scene was written about 1827, when Goethe was nearly eighty, and in it, Mr Santayana considers, he "reaches his highest potency as a poet and philosopher." Faust has been through a hell of remorse: he is now worn out, lying in a flowery meadow by a mountain lake and trying to sleep. It is the dusk of a mellow evening in spring, and through the air are floating fairy spirits led by Ariel who bids them sing him to sleep and restore him, because he has suffered enough. They respond at once: the gentle powers of nature and rebirth do not ask how far he is guilty or whether he is guilty at all:

> "Be the sufferer saint or sinner,
> They have pity for the man."

Four lovely stanzas follow, one for each of the night-watches, and then Faust awakes. He is now resolved to aim no longer at experience of any kind, provided it be exciting, but only at the best. Then, in the very hour of this resolve, he is dazzled by the dawn and realises that he cannot face the sun in its strength. The scene is short, as short as it is weighty, and to understand its significance in the history of his growth we should compare it with the Forest-scene in the First Part, written about forty years earlier. In both scenes Faust feels himself in close touch with Nature. But there are important differences. In the earlier passage he had

[1] *Paralipomena*, 49 (Insel-Verlag edition of *Faust*).

felt himself not only in touch with Nature but adequate to her. Her kingdom was his kingdom, he could be counted the peer of gods, and he was only troubled by his link with Mephistopheles, to whom he surrenders at the end. In the scene before us there is no thought of Mephistopheles. He is absent throughout. It is the limitation of human faculty that Faust recognises, and recognises without rebellion. He makes no more extravagant claims for "the pitiful little powers of the man who would like to recreate Heaven and Earth in his own image and rule as lord and master over existences that can never be mastered." [1] He remembers now with awe, not complacency, the flaming vision of the Earth-Spirit, and admits that he cannot look the Sun of the universe, the full truth of things, in the face.

We have already spoken, in the chapter on Nature, of Goethe's liking for such metaphors, a liking very noticeable at this period of his life. In a prose passage of 1825 he wrote:

"Truth, the Truth which is the same as the Divine, never lets itself be known by us immediately: we can only contemplate it in the reflected gleam, in an example, a symbol, in isolated and related appearances: we are aware of it as unfathomable life, and yet we cannot give up the longing to fathom it." [2]

A year later, in a letter to two friends,[3] one of them a man of science, he wrote:

"When I look on the latest advances in our knowledge, I seem to myself like a wanderer who has travelled Eastwards through the grey dawn and waited eagerly to see the great ball of fire appear, and yet when it has risen he

[1] To Frau von Stein, 9th July 1784.
[2] *Versuch einer Witterungslehre, init.*, J.-A., vol. 40, p. 55.
[3] To Carus and d'Alton, 1st January 1826.

has had to turn his eyes away, because they could not bear the radiance for which he had longed and hoped."

The year before he had said to Eckermann: "Man is born not to solve the problem of the universe, but to find out where it lies. . . . The reasoning of men and the Reason of God are two very different things. . . . Higher sayings we should only utter so far as they can help the world, the rest we should keep to ourselves, but they can and will shed a light over everything we do, like the soft splendour of a hidden sun." [1] "Man is formed," he wrote elsewhere, "to look on lit things, not on light," —("Erleuchtetes zu sehen, nicht das Licht"),—although, if he had not something of the sun in his own composition, he could not see any light at all:

> "Unless our eyes had something of the sun,
> How could we ever look upon the light?
> Unless there lived within us God's own might,
> How could the Godlike give us ecstasy?" [2]

In the passage we are considering, this metaphor of the sun as the final truth is combined with another, also a favourite of Goethe's, the likeness of man's life to running water. He had written long before:

> "Like water it wanders,
> The spirit of man:
> It comes from the sky,
> To the sky it goes,
> Then down once more,
> Drawn down to the earth,
> It changes, it flows." [3]

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[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 15th October 1825.

[2] "Wär nicht das Auge sonnenhaft,
Wie könnten wir das Licht erblicken?
Lebt' nicht in uns des Gottes eigne Kraft,
Wie könnt' uns Göttliches entzucken?"

In the *Farbenlehre* (J.-A., vol. 40, p. 71). Also, slightly modified, in *Zahme Xenien*, III.

[3] *Gesang der Geister über den Wässern*, October 1779.

Man, though he comes from the sky and though his own eyes are "sunlike," must look not at the sun itself but at its working in the rainbow that hangs over his torrent-life. Every reader will remember Shelley's metaphor, though Goethe, probably, did not know it:

> "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity
> Until death trample it to fragments."

We remember also, and no doubt Goethe, with his feeling for Plato, meant us to remember, the Platonic myth of the cave, where the prisoners, with their backs to the light, see only the shadows on the wall, not the fire that casts them. But the shadows are the shadows of the particulars that copy the Ideas, and the rainbow-colours are due to the light that issues from the sun. Though imperfect, they are allied to perfection; and, though transitory, also permanent. The task of man, whether in knowledge or action, is thus paradoxical. In knowledge he must admit "the Unsearchable, and then set no limits to his search." In action and in art he must make the moment eternal, even while it slips from him, by virtue of his selective insight, his power of growth, and that "memory" which is creation. To the artist something is promised that cannot perish:

> "In thy heart shall live the meaning,
> In thy mind the form." [1]

Goethe subscribes to the creed of Blake and of Keats that infinity may be held in the palm of the hand, eternity

[1] "Danke dass die Gunst der Musen
Unvergängliches verheisst:
Den Gehalt in deinem Busen
Und die Form in deinem Geist."
(*Dauer im Wechsel.*)

in an hour, and no thing of beauty ever pass into nothingness. To live so as to realise such a faith is the task for men, but Goethe never supposes he can complete it in this life. And so he gives us two poems, with two views of man's position, to both of which he held. The first expresses, uncompromisingly, the flux and littleness of his life:

"Wherein do they differ,
The high Gods and men?
The Gods see the waters
Flowing for ever:
Men, borne by the waters,
Borne down by the waters,
Sink in the stream.

A little circle
Limits our life,
But endless circles,
Life after life,
Follow and fill
The high Gods' chain." [1]

So the first poem ends. But the second takes it up:

"Bound by laws
Adamantine, eternal,
All we must fulfil
The ring of our life.

But Man alone
Shall reach the Unreachable,
Past all winnings
Man shall win:

He shall be arbiter,
Chooser, and judge.
Through Man shall the Moment
Live and endure." [2]

And in this second poem, it will be noticed, the value of the Moment, the need of making it endure, and man's

[1] "Grenzen der Menschheit" (1781).
[2] "Das Göttliche" (1783).

power of achieving this are as prominent as they are anywhere in *Faust*.

At the point we have reached in the drama Faust himself gets a glimpse of the truth, awaking restored and comforted by the song of the elves:

"The pulse of life beats strong, and I awaken
To greet the heavenly twilight of the dawn.
Thou, too, O soul of Earth, didst keep unshaken
Thy watch this night, to drink new life with morn.
Already thou dost compass me with joy,
Rousing and spurring will, resolve and strength
To struggle towards the highest life for ever.
The world lies open in a dewlit dream;
Birds, many-voiced, far through the forest sing;
Along the vale the mist winds like a steam,
But heaven's clearness broadens and strikes deep
Till bough and branchlet, new-bathed, upward spring
From gulfs of fragrance where all night they sleep.
All things take colour now before my eyes
And pearl-drops tremble on each leaf and flower;
The earth around me has grown Paradise.

Look up, look up!—Far off the giant mountains
Foretell the coming of the sacred hour.
They take their joy in those eternal fountains
Ere yet the flood-light fall on us below.
In the high pastures all the dimpled hollows
Moment by moment bright and brighter grow
And downward still the jewelled splendour follows,
The sun is here!—Alas, my eyes are blinded!
I turn away, I cannot bear his radiance.
Even so it is when all the self is minded
To force the goal by our own confidence
And wide are flung the gates of all fulfilment,
Sudden there bursts from that eternal portal
A sea of flame, past mercy, past concealment;
We thought to light a candle,—fire immortal
Wraps us, engulfed in unknown glowing seas:
Is it hate or love that those great gates outpour?
That ocean full of rapture and of tears?
Backward we shrink and turn to earth once more.
Hiding our faces in our childish fears.

Then be the sun behind me, not before!
I turn and gaze, my heart abrim with wonder,
Where the wild torrent down the torn cliff rushes.
From ledge to ledge it leaps in joyous thunder,
Forth in a thousand swirling streams it gushes,
Bursting in foam, tossing the spray on high.
Lo, in calm glory from the tumult springing
The million-coloured bow that cannot die!
Through change unchanging, now its pure arch flinging
In full clear lines, now faint where the winds fly,
While still the coolness and the fragrance hover.
Torrent and rainbow!—So our efforts seem.
Follow that thought, that image, and discover
Our life lies in the changing, coloured gleam."

(4679–727.)

[*Note.*—Goethe may have been thinking, in this passage, of his own suggestions for a new Theory of Colours, suggestions on which he spent so much time and energy and in which he has been thought so mistaken. The topic is beyond the scope of this book and we must admit that Goethe had not the mathematical ability to appreciate Newton; but the trend of modern theory, it may be worth mentioning, suggests that he was not so far wrong as many of his critics have supposed.]

CHAPTER X

THE EMPEROR'S COURT

The implications of the "rainbow" and the "torrent" reach far. But Faust himself does not realise how far. In fact, he is now disposed, in this surrender of his earlier cravings, to accept appearances merely as appearances, and not to look further, whereas "Man must cling to the belief that the Incomprehensible can be comprehended, otherwise he would give up the search."[1] Something must rouse him from this, if his growth is not to be checked. It is true that he desires a satisfactory task, but he has no idea what it should be. His next appearance is at the Emperor's Court where work is certainly required, but he lets Mephistopheles take the lead, until a new motive fires him.

From the fullest outline among several that Goethe wrote for his scheme it is clear that he had first conceived Faust as trying at once to play a finer part :[2] when Mephistopheles proposed a visit to the Court, he was to insist that there should be "no delusion and no illusion": when the Emperor asked for the help of magic, he was to answer by referring him to "higher needs and higher methods." The attempt was to fail: "the Emperor cannot understand him, the courtiers even less"; he

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 563.
[2] *Paralipomena*, 49. (*Faust*, Insel-Verlag.)

does not know how to go on, and falls back on the help of Mephistopheles. But when Goethe came to write the Act he left out these intermediate stages, partly, perhaps, because in the puppet-plays Faust only appears at the Court as a purveyor of amusement, but chiefly, one conjectures, because he felt that his Faust could not conceive the value of the civic life until he had been inspired by the conception of classic beauty.

Thus, from the scene in the mountains we pass without further introduction to the Emperor's Court, where a council is to be held. The monarch, seated on his throne, asks first for his fat old Fool, who has suddenly disappeared, tripped up mysteriously on the palace-steps, dragged away "drunk or dead, there's nobody knows," and who is at once supplanted by a lean, queer and commanding figure, Mephistopheles in a new disguise, who offers himself for the vacant place and is immediately accepted by the Emperor. Faust does not appear throughout the scene and Mephistopheles has it all his own way, over-ruling officials and courtiers who object.

The Chancellor, the Commander-in-chief, the Treasurer and the Marshal give a lamentable description of the anarchy prevailing. Here, as in the later scenes about the Empire, Goethe has gathered together points from many periods, from the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the *ancien régime* that he had known himself. Throughout he is trying to present the characteristics that had made both for brilliance and disaster at any period since the Holy Roman Empire first began, a broad idea, though one better suited for an epic than a drama. Thus one root of the trouble is lack of money, and this in turn springs from the carelessness and extravagance of the princes. The Emperor wants to enjoy himself quite as much as to govern. It is Carnival-time and he cannot

see why a council need be held at all. But he means well, and has summoned the assembly in deference to his advisers. In response to the general tale of woe he calls on the new Fool for his advice. Mephistopheles has no intention of giving real help, but his intellect cannot resist emphasising the immediate need, that of money, and the means of getting it:

> "How win it? Well, I know what can:
> The nature and the intellect of man."

The words "nature" and "intellect" horrify the orthodox Chancellor:

> "Intellect, Nature!——Paganism, flat!
> Atheists are burnt for saying less than that.
> Most dangerous, a perfect powder-train!
> Nature is Sin, and Intellect the Devil,
> And Doubt the monstrous child they entertain.
> Not we!——In our old fatherland
> Two classes, and two only, stand
> To guard the Emperor worthily,
> Clergy and nobles. Loyally
> They ward off tempests every day,
> And take the Church and State for pay.
> Rebellion springs from crooked minds
> Who rouse the mob to disobey,
> Heretics, wizards! They'd destroy
> City and land if they had their way. . . ."
>
> (4897–912.)

To all of which Mephistopheles retorts:

> "Ah, there's the man of learning, through and through!
> What you can't touch you think is miles away,
> What you can't grasp can never be in view,
> What you can't reckon never can be true.
> What you can't weigh has no weight, great or small,
> What's not your coin can never count at all."
>
> (4917–922.)

Mephistopheles has much the best of it, and his answer illustrates the fact that in this Second Part, even

more than in the First, he often utters Goethe's own wisdom. Goethe, we have recognised, was a convinced monarchist all his life and a believer in the hierarchy of classes. But he was no supporter of monarchs or nobles who did not take their duties seriously, neglected the interests of any class, or shut their eyes to facts. That led straight to disaster. The scandal of the Diamond Necklace with the evil light it threw on the French aristocracy was to him, he has told us, like the sight of the Gorgon's head.[1] Revolution was always the fault, not so much of the people as of a Government that condoned injustice.[2]

> "'Why have they tumbled the poor king down?'
> Had he been a king, he'd have kept his crown." [3]

In opposition to tyrants, "kings of slaves," and *rois fainéants*, he could sympathise with the ideals of revolutionaries, as several passages in his writings show; the warm words, for example, in the opening of *Hermann und Dorothea*, the description of the lean "Don Quixotes" in the French cavalry riding out of Mayence, singing the Marseillaise, with something "terrible and sublime" about them, and the noble character he chose for the husband in *Die Natürliche Tochter*.[4] Still, he always thought democratic methods mistaken. He who cared so much about self-development for all men, and knew that "Mankind is only made by all men together"—"Nur alle Menschen machen die Menscheit aus" [5]—he never admitted that the average man needed a voice

[1] Compare the passage in the "Annalen" under the year 1789.
[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 4th January 1824.
[3] *Zahme Xenien*, IX, J.-A., vol. 4, p. 134.
[4] This play was to be the first of a trilogy in which he would have expressed his deepest feeling about the French Revolution.
[5] *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, Bk. 8, c. 5. A wonderful passage.

in politics if he was to develop; and it never seems even to have occurred to him that the economic foundations of society might be challenged as unfair. The old order, he believed, if properly worked, would secure justice and co-operation far better than democratic bungling. There was a difference between the soul of a People, "Volkheit," and the actual Public, the "Volk": "The first is ever the same, and its voice is the voice of Reason, permanent, pure and true. The other, the Public, never knows what it really wants, just because it wants so much. The law can express and ought to express the real Will of the People, a Will which the mob never expresses, but which the wise man hears, and knows how to satisfy, and the good man satisfies gladly." [1]

But this ideal meant work, as no one knew better than Goethe, who had spent years of his life in its service at Weimar. It was work specially needed for the salvation of his Faust, though Faust seems to have even less realisation of the need than the Emperor himself. The Emperor, bent on immediate results, has no more relish for Mephistopheles' wit than for the Chancellor's "Lenten sermon." What he wants is money. Can Mephistopheles get it? It doesn't matter how. Mephistopheles discerns an easy prey, and amuses himself with lavish and ironical promises. There is gold everywhere, gold hidden in the ground since the time of the Romans, gold in mines; people have only to dig it up. And whatever can be found is the Emperor's by right. The Court Astrologer, prompted by Mephistopheles, declares in a solemn rigmarole that the omens are good, and Mephistopheles himself adds, that if the gold is near, the courtiers will feel a twitching in their limbs. This the crowd at once declare that they do. The Emperor has his doubts,

[1] Shortened from *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 682.

and demands a prompt performance; but Mephistopheles has little trouble in putting him off. The search must be at night: that is the time for mysteries. And when the Emperor still persists, he warns him through the voice of the Astrologer against over-haste and lack of belief, and dangles the prospect of amusement before him.

The Emperor is delighted at the idea of a pleasant interlude before Ash-Wednesday, when he means to begin work in earnest. He and his Court withdraw in the highest spirits, and Mephistopheles is left to sneer at the men he has deluded:

> "How work and welfare link, poor fools,
> Is something they have never known;
> Even if they found the stone of wisdom,
> There'd be no wise man for the stone!"
>
> (5061–64.)

For the masque that follows Goethe drew upon his experiences in arranging such entertainments at the Weimar Court, and also on his recollections of the Roman Carnival. The latter, at the time, impressed him disagreeably. It brought, he wrote, "no delight to the eyes and no peace to the heart." [1] He had felt something "incomprehensible, unenjoyable, even terrifying," in a holiday where "everyone, without any inward gaiety, could be as mad as he chose," although the characters might symbolise "the greatest moments in human life," marriage and birth and death. "The sky," he adds, "endlessly beautiful and pure, looked down on all this folly." And this distaste is to be felt here, in the undercurrents of bitterness and the desire of the Boy-Guide to escape. Nevertheless, it is plain that Goethe must have enjoyed devising so spirited a pageant, though he was

[1] *Ital. Reise*, 21st February 1787.

never to see it performed, and indeed doubted whether its fantasies did not go too far for a satisfactory performance.[1] On a modern stage, however, with appropriate music and the skill of a Russian ballet, it might be extremely effective. The whole scene, until near the close, recalls a picture by Watteau with its delight in elegant luxury and its delicate satire on what the luxury involves. The opening speech of the Herald strikes the note:

"No Gothic festival to-day,
No Dance of Death, no clownish play,
Everything sunny, clear, and gay.
The Emperor marching back from Rome,
Carried a brighter treasure home:
He crossed the Alps to win a crown
And brought the domino back to town.
We're all transformed! We draw the hood
Over the head the way we should.
We look like fools, I quite agree,
But we're as wise as fools can be.
Already lovers are trooping hither,
They float apart, they flit together,
Chorus on chorus, a careless rout,
Laughing and winding in and out.
A thousand follies fill the scene
And the world's as mad as it's always been!"
(5065–87.)

The masque itself begins, like the masque in Handel's *Semele*, with a company of fine gentlemen and ladies, all in gardening-dress, singing and showing off their wares in the palace-hall. Then a mother comes forward with a marriageable daughter, ageing but still hoping to find a husband at carnival-time. They are followed by a bevy of charming girls and these by troops of fishermen, fowlers, woodcutters, pulchinellos, parasites, tipplers,

[1] See his words to Eckermann, *Goethes Gespräche*, 20th December 1829.

poets of every school, so many and so various that none but the satirist can get a hearing. When the "Graveyard poets" withdraw to talk over secrets with a vampire, the Herald thinks it time to summon figures from the Greek Mythology. The Graces are bewitching, the Fates adapted to the preferences of a Court, with their sterner elements suspended, and the Furies, like the Fates, have altered their antique guise. But the Herald understands the lovely creatures:

"They are the Furies, doubt it as ye may,
Young, fair, and slender, ready for your love.
Yet learn to know them, and beneath the dove
You see the snake lie, watching for its prey.
Cunning they are, I know! But this one day,
When every fool in folly's cap rejoices,
They will not flatter you with angel-voices,
But claim their power to blight and curse and slay.

THE FURIES.

Alecto. That will not help you. You will trust us still,
For we are fair, with many a coaxing wile,
And if a man has won a maid, we smile,
Tickle his hearing, listen at his will,
Until the time comes, with our eyes on his,
To tell him that she favours every lover,
That she's a fool, lame, hunch-backed, we discover,
And though his bride she be, a worthless minx.
Ay, and to her we bring worse tidings yet,
How her betrothed, a few short weeks ago,
Slighted her beauty to a maid we know!
They kiss again, they cannot quite forget.

Megaera. All that is nothing! When they once are bound
My day has come! Through whims and moodiness
I turn the loveliest joy to bitterness.
For man's heart changes, and the hours change.
He clasps his treasure and he lets it go,
Yearning for something more he seems to guess,
Fool that he is, wearied by happiness,
He flies the sun and tries to warm the snow.

All this I use to compass my own end,
Bringing Asmodeus with me, trusty, true,
At the right moment misery to strew
And thus in marriage-bonds destroy mankind.

Tisiphone. I do not slander, but instead
I act, and the false lover's dead.
I whet the dagger, mix the poison-bowl,
Sooner or later Hell shall have his soul.
The sweetest moment turns to gall;
No bargaining can save him now!
Who did the deed must pay the toll.
Prate not of pardon! The rocks shall hear me call,
Cry for revenge, and echo back the cry:
Once he is faithless, let him die!" (5349-92.)

Something very grim has come into the masque. And now other figures follow, symbolising wider possibilities both for good and for harm than are open to the limited Court life. The goddess of Victory, winged like a white eagle, comes riding on a richly-caparisoned elephant with Prudence as mahout and Hope and Fear attendant in chains. The Hope thus represented is not the hope whom Goethe called "his goddess," the Hope of Wordsworth's line,

"We live by admiration, hope, and love."

She is rather the trivial belief in the impossible, the hope that men must learn to do without. Unless a man knew how to despair, wrote Goethe in one of his pithy rhymes, he did not know how to live.[1] And thus in this passage Prudence calls both Hope and Fear "two of Mankind's greatest foes." At the same time, and it is characteristic, Goethe puts into the mouth even of this Hope, words that suggest far more sympathy with her than with her fellow-prisoner, Fear.

[1] "Wer nicht verzweifeln kann, der muss nicht leben." From the series *Sprichwörtlich* in J.-A., vol. 4, p. 19.

Victory is called "goddess of all activities," and though Goethe despised "fame," had indeed, as Mme de Stael saw, "le dédain du succès," he was far too sincere a believer in life to despise ultimate results. He has no sympathy with the creature who now rails at Victory, who wants to see "great made small and small made great," and is masked to represent two men, Zoilus, the grammarian who belittled Homer, and Thersites, the demagogue who cried down the heroes. "Zoilo-Thersites" must be either Mephistopheles himself or a familiar, to judge from the monstrous transformations he undergoes when the Herald belabours him with his wand of office. He embodies the envy which is among the meanest forms of egoism, and which Goethe believed played a sinister part in the excesses of all revolutions. The Herald drives him away for the time, but knows that an ominous spirit has entered the company and that he cannot guard against it wholly.

But at this point another pageant appears. Plutus, the god of Wealth, comes riding in a marvellous chariot, drawn by winged dragons and guided by a lovely boy. It rushes through the throng and yet no one can see the track it makes. Behind Wealth crouches the figure of Avarice. The mask of Plutus conceals Faust and that of Avarice Mephistopheles, but the chariot is the chariot of Imagination:

> "Stars about it gleam and fall,
> Wandering lights drift on before,
> Many-coloured, magical.
> Far away its coming shines!
> It thunders on us like a storm!"

The boy is the Spirit of Poetry. It is he who could transform and save the world; but men do not recognise him. Even the Herald has to ask who he is:

"*The Boy-Guide.*

I am the spendthrift, I am Poetry!
And still the more I spend, the richer I,
And there I live where most I seem to die.
For I have riches far beyond your pelf,
I am as rich as Plutus' very self,
Beauty and life of banquet, dance, and show:
All that he lacks, I have it to bestow." (5573–79.)

But his gifts are wasted by the crowd; they let the fire go out which he scattered among them:

"The finest treasures at my call,
See, I have flung them to you all!
On many a head a tiny flame
That from my dancing fires came:
From one to another they flutter and flit,
But they will not settle, the sparks I lit;
Here they linger and there they fly,
But seldom, ah seldom! they leap on high
And kindle into the swift sweet flower;
With most the touch will quench my power.
Alas, alas, ere men can know
That the light has come, the light must go!"
(5630–39.)

"Things go ill with men," Goethe wrote once to Zelter,[1] "because all Art, which ought really to work for living men in so far as it is great and worthy of eternity, finds itself at variance with the age, and every true artist must live alone and in despair, knowing all the while that he possesses what men need and that he might have given it to them."

It is only Faust, the rich rider in the Car, who has any understanding of the Boy he has brought with him (and in this we have traces of Goethe's original plan). The association of poetry with wealth and of the poet with the patron is traditional, goes back indeed to the Greeks, and Goethe adopts it here whole-heartedly. Partly, because

[1] 13th July 1804.

wealth without poetry was always for him dead and meaningless. "I have often said," he wrote to Frau von Stein during the first ten years at Weimar (3rd March 1785), "and I shall often have to repeat, that the Final Cause of the world and of world-commerce is the poetic drama. Otherwise there's simply no use to be made of the stuff." But also Goethe felt keenly the poet's need of leisure and the need of wealth to provide that. His own position had been made by the generosity of a patron. Karl August left the poet free, when he needed it, to go to Italy, and when, in this masquerade, Plutus gives the boy leave to depart into solitude, the allusion is obvious and further pointed by the fact that Faust wears for the occasion the features of Weimar's Duke (5554 f.). He turns to the Guide:

> "Now art thou free from thy too heavy burden,
> Now swift to thine own place! There find thy guerdon!
> It is not here, where motley and caprice
> Throng round us, like wild dreams that will not cease.
> Thither, where thou canst look into the light,
> Where thou canst trust thyself, thyself alone,
> Where only loveliness and good have might,
> To Solitude! There shape thy world, thine own!"
> (5689–96.)

Yet the same Spirit of Poetry, appearing later as Euphorion, points Faust back, as we shall find, to the world of actuality. Goethe needed, and knew that every poet needed, both solitude and the life among men.[1] And the one no less than the other. Once, standing on the top of a huge granite boulder, he had thought to himself: "So lonely must a man be, if the oldest, earliest and profoundest truths are ever to sink into his heart." [2]

[1] Compare his words in *Tasso*:

> " Talent will grow and flower in solitude,
> Character in the crowd."

[2] *Über das Granit.*

And the solitude he needed meant something deeper, as we discover in a coming scene, than the mere absence of other men.

The Boy-Guide has vanished, and now "Plutus," to amuse the Court, opens a chest of what seems to be gold, crowns and chains and jewels and ducats and rivers of molten metal, warning the excited throng not to come too near. But he can only stop their rush by scaring the foremost with a sprinkle of burning drops, and he foresees further danger. Meantime the lean lustful Avarice entertains himself both by sneering at the women for their extravagance and wooing the prettiest outrageously or luring them by kneading handfuls of the melting gold into would-be attractive shapes. Suddenly, there is a joyous incursion of Fauns, Satyrs, Gnomes, Giants and Nymphs, a company of reckless, nature-loving masqueraders who prepare the entry of the god Pan, the young Emperor himself in disguise. This part of the pageant has real brightness, for Goethe, who could never have been Tolstoyan, saw no reason why a brilliant Court should not, after all, in spite of its "motley and caprice," be lit with a reflection of poetry, if it so desired. A whisper, the Boy-Guide had said, would bring him back again. At the same time Faust knows that the recklessness may lead to catastrophe. While he gives way before the new arrivals, recognising the Imperial favourites, he warns them that they do not know where they are going. On they come dancing, sure of themselves, and mocking the earlier guests:

"O you bedizened tinsel crew!
A mightier people come to you!
Rough and lusty and strong,
Laughing, leaping along!

Fauns. We are the Fauns, and we lead the dance,
With our furry ears and our tangled curls

And our oak-leaf crowns where the fine tips glance!
The little snub nose, the gay broad face
In ladies' favour will find a place:
When the dancing faun puts out a paw
The beauty of beauties can't withdraw.

Satyrs. Here are the Satyrs hurrying in,
Goat-foot, sinewy, lithe, and thin!
We scramble and climb for own delight
As the chamois climb on the mountain-height
In the open airs of freedom born!
And we cover the creatures below with scorn,
The wife and the child and the foolish man
Who live in the valley as live they can,
In the fog and smoke they have always known.
But we are quit of the multitude,
Lords of the hills and the solitude! (5815–39.)

. . . . . .

Chorus of Nymphs (*encircling Pan*).
And now comes he, our great god Pan!
In his wonderful eyes
The whole world lies
For every man!
Circle him round with our merriest throng,
With mazy dance and magical song,
For faithful is he, and gracious and good,
And would have us all of a frolicsome mood.
When the sky is burning and blue and deep
He will wake and watch and hold him from sleep,
Though the streamlets croon to him, murmuring low,
And the breezes would cradle him to and fro.
But when he sleeps in the high noonday
Not a leaf will rustle upon the spray,
And only the dreaming flowers fill
The air with their fragrance, soft and still;
The dancing nymphs with their dance have done,
They sleep where they stand in the shade of the sun.
But when his sudden terrible shout
Over the countryside rings out,
Like the thunder-roll or the roar of the sea,
Then valiant warriors turn and flee
And the hero trembles on the field.
Honour to him where honour is due,
King and leader and guardian too!" (5872–97.)

Surrounded by this charming adulation, the Emperor falls a prey to the perils of magic. Faust has already, against his better judgment, yielded to the insistence of the rollicking flatterers and opened the "unseen circle" with which he had been guarding the gold. The gnomes now lead the Emperor right up to the fiery well-spring, a spring of which Faust knows the danger, but which he believes he can master. The Emperor peers down curiously into the depths, and his mummer's beard catches fire. The courtiers rush to his help, but the conflagration only spreads. The Herald fears an end of everything through this folly:

> "O Youth, O Youth, and wilt thou never
> Learn the true limit in delight?
> O Power, Power, wilt thou never
> Learn reason in the use of might?" (5958–61.)

But Faust's confidence in his own powers is not altogether unwarranted. If he plays with fire, he can call to his aid the kindlier elements in Magic. He summons the cool air, the mist and the rain to quell the conflagration; and for the time the situation is saved.

The bearing of the parable would have been plain enough to any one at that date who, like Goethe, believed in the old order, but saw its dangers. The carnival symbolises the glittering surface of that chaos which Faust ought to mould into something like a cosmos. But Faust, though he has foresight, imagination and the ability which gives him a hold over other minds, has found it easier to waste these gifts in the wizardry of charlatanism. The treatment of finance is typical. From the scene next morning in the Palace-garden we learn that the Emperor, during the masquerade, urged by the Chancellor and on the faith of the promised treasure, has signed a document authorising the issue of paper-money,

an expedient which Goethe, from his experience with the French *assignats*, took as the sign of an unsound Exchequer. The Emperor has doubts himself, but is carried away by the delight of Marshal, General, Treasurer and Chancellor, and their reports of instantaneous relief throughout the harassed Empire. The credit for the device is given frankly to Faust and Mephistopheles, and from Faust's remarks to Mephistopheles later, as well as from Goethe's own words to Eckermann,[1] we see that Mephistopheles has prompted it all, amusing himself meanwhile by advising the flattered monarch to defy the laws of physical nature as well as those of national wealth. The fire has already submitted to the Emperor's will:

> "Now try the sea,
> Plunge where the billows wanton savagely,
> And scarcely shall you touch the pearly floor
> When they will close you in a radiant sphere,
> Green waving waters heaving crystal-clear,
> With purple borders for your palace-wall,
> And you yourself the centre of it all.
> Move where you will, your palace follows you,
> Loving the arrowy swiftness of the life,
> The flowing changes and the laughing strife,
> While strange sea-monsters dart along to win
> The new soft glow, but cannot enter in.
> The rainbow-dragons show their golden claws,
> The shark's teeth gape,—you laugh at those huge jaws!"
> (6006–18.)

But if the Emperor is fooled by his vanity, he wants something more than mere accumulation, which, in the end, only bores him. He hopes that all classes will share in the general joy, and that his own idle courtiers will use the wealth for some worthy undertaking. But they all fail him:

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[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 29th December 1829.

"*Emperor.* Now if I gave these notes to every man,
How would he use them? Answer, those who can!
First Page.
Gay life for me! I'll never have a care.
Second Page.
And I will buy me jewels for my dear.
First Chamberlain.
I'll never drink bad wine again, I'll vow.
Second Chamberlain.
Gambling for me! The dice are dancing now.
First Knight.
I'll free my castle and my land from debt.
Second Knight.
It's gold! I'll add it to what gold I get.
Emperor. I hoped for noble aims and courage high,
I might have better gauged your quality.
Pile up your riches, gather more and more,
It makes no odds! You're what you were before."
(6143–54.)

He turns away from them in contempt, and meeting his fat old Fool at the door, recovered unexpectedly from his drinking-bout, gives him five thousand crowns' worth in disgust. The Fool will make as good use of the notes as anyone.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIRST VISION OF HELEN

The next desire of the Emperor is for the evocation of Helen and Paris, "the fairest forms of Woman and of Man." The appearing of Helen, an essential part of the original legend and always a feature of the puppet-play, had been a familiar theme to Goethe from his boyhood, but no writer before him had ever thought of giving it a share in the possible redemption of Faust. On the contrary, it had always been treated as the supreme temptation. Perhaps the greatest single achievement in Goethe's remodelling of the old plot lies in his handling of this subject. The evils of lust he had dealt with in the Gretchen-tragedy and he is free to use the pursuit of Helen for a further symbolism. The evocation may not mean much to the Emperor, but it comes to mean everything to Faust, as the close of this Act foreshadows. At first he thinks it a small matter. He takes Mephistopheles aside and orders him to produce the figures at once. But Mephistopheles cannot do this: he has no power here. He can furnish a clue, but that is all. Faust himself must descend beneath the earth to the place of the "Mothers," taking with him a magic key that Mephistopheles provides, and with this key he must touch a glowing tripod that stands in their presence. The

adventure is lonely and perilous, but only so can Helen be found.

This is the first time, since the Mountain-scene, that Faust feels the impulse and the need to rely on his own effort. Helen is to be the chief inspiration of his new life. She symbolises the classic conception of Beauty; and Goethe, in his notes for the Second Act, speaks of Faust's passion, after his first glimpse of Helen, as an "infinite yearning for the highest beauty he had once known." [1] All that Goethe himself had learned in Italy lies behind this. But in the union which follows later between Faust and Helen, in the Third Act, Goethe goes beyond the antithesis of "classic" and "romantic," and adumbrates a type of imagination developing from both. "Even in the opening Acts," so he said to Eckermann when all three were finished,[2] "the classic and the romantic are constantly being mentioned, so that we ascend, as it were, stage by stage to the *Helena*, where both forms appear fully and find that they are at peace together." The ideal beauty in art and in life of which the Greeks had dreamt—and it was they who "dreamt the dream of life at its fairest" [3]—Mephistopheles, on his own confession, cannot reach. But Faust can. Here is a clear distinction between the two, and we shall see it emphasised in the following Acts.

Meantime there is much in this close of the First that requires elucidation. To raise even the phantasm of Helen, Faust must descend to "the Mothers." Who are they? And what is their connection with Helen? When Eckermann questioned Goethe on the point, the

[1] *Paralipomena*, 49 (*Faust*, Insel-Verlag).

[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 16th December 1829. The whole context is worth study.

[3] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 298.

poet, he tells us, "only wrapped himself up in mystery, as he so often does, gazed at me with his eyes dilating, and repeated the words:

'Die Mütter, Mütter! 's klingt so wunderlich!'"[1]

He would only add that he had learnt from Plutarch how "the Mothers" were worshipped as divinities by the Greeks.

But we can find a further clue in another passage of Plutarch's. In his Dialogue on *The Decline of the Oracles*, he elaborates a myth about the scores of worlds which make up the universe and how they are ranged, one touching the other, along the lines of a great triangle, and so ranged "they move in measure round and round, like the dancers in a chorus." "Now that triangle is the central hearth for them all. It is called the Plain of Truth, and on it there lie unmoved the Ideas and Forms of everything that has been or that will be, and forth from it Time, like an efflux from Eternity, flows out to all the worlds. Sight of it is granted once only to mortal souls in ten thousand years, and then only if they have lived righteously. The best of all our Mysteries on earth are only shadows and symbols of that Mystery and that Initiation. And we study Philosophy in order that we may recall its beauty or else our study is in vain."[2]

If we remember Goethe's own theory of "Ideas," outlined in our second chapter, we can understand how he would have been attracted by this myth of Plutarch's, itself derived from Plato. The "Ideas," as we saw, were to Goethe energies which created and controlled natural

[1] "The Mothers, Mothers! It sounds so wonderful!" (*Goethes Gespräche*, 10th January 1830). Goethe's eyes were large, dark and singularly expressive.

[2] Plutarch, *Marcellus*, c. 20, *Decline of the Oracles*, c. 22. See J.-A., vol. 14, notes *ad loc.*

things, and were themselves emanations of one fundamental Energy. "This stupendous force," he writes in the short essay called *Bildungstrieb*, "we can personify as a God, Creator and Preserver." Here "the Mothers" take the place of such a God: the Mothers create the Ideas perpetually; from the Mothers they issue, and to them they return.

But further, as we have also indicated, Goethe held that Art proceeded from the same source as Nature. The one was not, indeed, a mere imitation of the other. It was a poor compliment to Apelles, he wrote, that the birds should peck his painted fruit. Nor was Art a mere selection from Nature. It discovered forms that never appeared in Nature at all. But neither were the two disconnected. For they both sprang from the same root. Thus Art was always finding Nature, "even while she seemed to fly from her." She went beyond, but not away from her; and that in spite of "the huge gulf between them." And through this divergent union Art brought to light "unknown harmonies of Being" that could never have appeared in any other way. That is why mere "representation" is quite a subordinate element in Art, and the onlooker who delights only in that stands only "on the lowest step of the stairs." [1] The artist can value *him*, but *he* can only value the artist "so long as the artist comes down to his own level: he can never rise with him when the flight begins, and the range widens and the real work has to be done." The beauty shown by the true artist is always something new, and so always apt to prove a stumbling-block to the Philistine, who only likes what he has been accustomed to. But these discoveries of Art were essential for the satisfaction of Man. Conduct, with all its importance, was not

[1] *Ueber Wahrheit und Wahrscheinlichkeit der Kunstwerke*, J.-A., vol. 33.

enough. Art was the completion of Morality. The two were not to be identified—Goethe always insisted on that,—but they were united, and fundamentally, through that "eternal harmony in all Being," [1] belief in which was the first and last article of Goethe's creed.

If Art seemed to him so important, it was because he believed it to be bound up with ultimate truth. Faust in his quest is powerless without the bright key of Imagination, but that key alone will not ensure his end. The mind of the artist must make its way to a truth beyond itself if it is to win what it wants, "the assurance that it is not playing with dream-shadows, but that its work is founded on Ideas." [2] Faust during his journey must keep off the visions that might bewilder him and somehow reach the sources of all Reality where the springs of Life and Art, of Day and Night, lie close together: his key must touch the tripod that stands on the Plain of Truth, if he is to get the prize—the wonderful scarf, as Goethe pictured it elsewhere,

> "Sun-clear, dew-soft, woven in morning's youth,
> The veil of Poetry from the hand of Truth." [3]

So, in a maxim of his own, Goethe could write "the first and last thing required of genius is the love of truth." [4]

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 562.

[2] "Beilage an Maria Paulovna," in the Weimar edition of Goethe's Letters.

[3] From *Zueignung*, the Dedication to his Collected Poems.

[4] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 382. "Das Erste und Letzte, was vom Genie gefordert wird, ist Wahrheitsliebe." In view of this fundamental belief it seems more than a little unfair to Carlyle that he should have been blamed so severely for misquoting the phrase "im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen" of the *Generalbeichte* as "im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren." As a matter of fact, Goethe varied the phrase more than once himself so as to introduce the "True." For example, in the *Geschichte der Farbenlehre*, speaking with his usual reverence of Plato, he says, "Alles, was er aussert, bezieht sich auf ein ewig Ganzes, Gutes, Wahres, Schönes"

Mephistopheles is forced to tell Faust the way to these ultimate origins. Driven to extremities he must, in his own words and by the terms of his compact with Faust, "help himself out with truth at last" (l. 6364). And that he is so driven shows that Faust's demands are getting finer. He is undeterred by Mephistopheles' warning of the loneliness he will have to face. Nor is the warning a mere threat. The search for such Beauty means that a man must go out beyond all natural appearances that are, have been, or will be. And this remains true whether the artist creates what we call a new form of art or recaptures a vision that men have experienced in the past. What Faust goes to recapture is the vision of ancient Greece. It is a great step in his development; but we must note that he is still hampered by his limitations. He leaves Mephistopheles behind him, it is true, and the magic he uses is "white." But magic it still must be, for he is still dogged by illusion and arrogance. "Helen," Goethe wrote in the outline already quoted, "belongs to the realm of Orcus: she can be conjured out of it by magic arts, she cannot be held." [1] But Faust, as soon as he beholds her, believes he can keep her his own for ever in the kingdom of fact as well as the kingdom of dream. However, what he does accomplish here he accomplishes by himself, overcoming the reluctance of Mephistopheles, strong though that reluctance is. At first Mephistopheles tries to take shelter behind his own impotence:

"*Meph.* With the pagan folk there's nothing I can do.
They live alone, in their own private hell.
Yet there's a way.

(J.-A., vol. 40, p. 154). Similarly in his *Epilog zu Schillers Glocke*, he speaks of the flight of his friend's spirit "Ins Ewige des Wahren, Guten, Schönen."

[1] *Paralipomena*, 49.

Faust. Tell me, and quickly too!
Meph. High is the secret, and I am loth to tell—
Goddesses, crowned and throned in loneliness,
Beyond all space, beyond all time, they dwell—
To speak of them at all is foolishness.
They are the Mothers!
Faust. The Mothers!
Meph. What? Afraid?
Faust. The Mothers, Mothers! It sounds so wonderful!
Meph. And wonderful it is. Far off, unknown,
Unseen by mortals, goddesses we own,
But fear to name. It's you who need their grace:
Then search the deeps yourself and find their dwelling-place.
Faust. Show me the way!
Meph. No way! Untrodden ground,
Where none may tread, a way that must be found
Beyond all finding, prayed-for past all prayer.
Thither, if you are ready and can dare!
No locks there are, no bolts to thrust aside,
Loneliness round you, void far and wide—
Know you what loneliness and void mean?
Faust. You might have spared me all this chatter;
I catch the Witch's-cauldron patter,
The trick of a long-vanished scene.
Was I not forced to dwell among mankind,
Emptiness teaching, emptiness to find?
While, if I uttered what I saw and knew,
Denial rang, the false howled down the true,
Until I left the hateful useless fray,
To lonely wildernesses made my way,
And, not to waste my whole life in the end,
Took the born-devil for my bosom friend.
Meph. Hadst thou swum through the ocean, sea on sea,
And gazed upon that vast infinity,
Still hadst thou looked on wave that followed wave,
Even in thy trembling at the yawning grave.
Something thou wouldst have seen,—the dolphins leap
Through the green spaces of the quiet deep,
The scudding clouds, the sun, the moon, the stars;
Nought wilt thou see in the void beyond all bars,
The eternal blank! Not hear thy own footfall,
And where thou standest find no place at all!

Faust. The first of all the Mystagogues are you,
Cheating the true disciples as they do;
Only the fraud's reversed. Into a blank
You send me after wisdom. Now be frank!
You'd have me pull the chestnuts from the fire,
Cat's-paw for you! Yes, that's your real desire.
Well, forward! I will probe this to the ground,
For in your Nought my All may yet be found.
Meph. You know your devil through and through, I see.
Before we part, this compliment from me!
Here, take this key!
Faust. That tiny little thing?
Meph. First take it, and then see what it may bring!
Faust. It's growing in my grasp! It shines, and now,
Flashes like lightning!
Meph. Useful, you allow?
Follow it down and find the Mothers there!
Faust (*shuddering*).
The Mothers!——It is more than I can bear!
What is that word? It smites me like a blow!
Meph. Pedant, for a new word to scare you so!
Must you hear only what you've heard before?
Yet nothing now should startle you at all;
You've known so long the strangest things of all.
Faust. To be a fossil scarcely suits my plan,
Wonder and Awe are still the best of Man.
Dear though the world would have us pay for it,
Strike deep enough, we feel the Infinite.
Meph. Down to the depths then! Or perhaps the heights!
It's all the same! Far from the Actual,
Into the world of Freedom and of Form,
Exulting in the vanished, deathless Past!
But when the visions throng you like a storm
Then swing the key and clear them from your path!
Faust (*inspired*).
I grasp it, and new vigour fires my heart:
Good! I am ready for the enterprise.
Meph. Listen! A tripod glows before your eyes
When you have found the deepest depth of all,
And you will see the Mothers by its ray,
Some on their thrones, while others come and go
Even as they will. And still the ceaseless flow,
Eternal wisdom at eternal play,

Forming, transforming, for its own delight,
Girt round by visions of all things that be.
They see you not, the Forms alone they see.
Call on your heart then, for the risk is great,
Make for the tripod, falter not, go straight,
And touch it with the key!
(*Faust makes a gesture of command with the key.*)
That's right!
Then it will follow, like a servant true:
Calmly you'll rise, your rapture raising you,
Before they notice, you will bring it back.
And once it is on earth you may invoke
Hero and heroine from their home of Night,
The first of men to do that deed of might!
Yes, you yourself may do it! Incense-smoke
Will change to gods at the magician's word.
Faust. And now, what next!
Meph. Down, hard as you can strain!
Sink with a stamp, and stamping rise again.
(*Faust stamps and sinks into the ground.*)
Will the key serve him? Will he find the track?
I'm curious to know if he'll get back." (6209–306.)

Faust has outstripped Mephistopheles, who half hopes, half fears that he may fail. But, after an interlude during which Mephistopheles is besieged by the fine ladies and the courtiers with their unconscionable demands, suddenly the lights burn low and the whole Court gathers together in the ancient hall of the castle, hung with tapestry and haunted by the past. It is in this place of Romanticism that the classic Helen is to reappear. The walls roll back from the magical stage, showing a noble Doric temple, which the Court Architect, who approves nothing but Decorated Gothic, considers a very clumsy erection. And now, robed as a priest, Faust rises from the earth, with the tripod beside him, and calls upon the Mothers:

"In your great name, ye Mothers, and your throne
Far in the boundless, where ye dwell alone

And yet companioned, through eternity!
Visions of life that move but live not, soar
Beneath your eyes, and, radiant as of yore,
Beauty, long dead, moves with them, and has share
In the Eternal, buds and blossoms there.
And forth ye send them, Powers of deathless might!
These to the day, those to the brooding Night,
And these will glide into life's laughing stream,
Those answer to the bold magician's dream,
Till trustfully he brings, for all to see,
What all desire, marvel and mystery." (6427–38.)

Closing his invocation Faust holds out the glowing key that he carries and touches the tripod. At the touch a mist rises and floats through the hall, winding and changing, making music as it flows. The pillars and the triglyphs echo: the whole temple seems to sing. At last the vapour sinks to the ground, and from it emerge the forms of Paris and Helen. The effect on the Court is trivial; they measure beauty like this by their own standards, and of course the women find plenty to criticise in Helen and the men in Paris. None of them feels any great emotion. Mephistopheles, frankly, feels nothing at all:

"That's she, then? Well, she won't disturb my rest:
Pretty, of course, but still I'm not impressed."
(6479–80.)

But Faust is transported beyond himself. Like all who have recaptured a genuine dream of beauty, he is enamoured of it. And like all so enamoured, he cannot be content merely to be assured of its existence in some Platonic "place above the heavens": he wants to possess it in this world. The loveliness of Classical Art has re-opened the universe to him, and now he will demand the Double Kingdom, ideal and actual, for his own.

His discipline has not yet been long enough or severe enough for him to realise the effort needed if he is even

to hold the Dream, much less to realise it. He thinks he can make Helen his own at once and completely and for ever. His first words, however, are words of reverence and amazement. Classical beauty seems to him the absolute ideal, and he himself in a world of enchantment that is the most real of all things:

"Is it some sense far deeper than the eyes
That knows the fount of loveliness revealed?
Did my dread journey win this wondrous prize?
How small the world seemed once, close-shut and sealed,
And now that I am Beauty's priest, how vast!
Built to endure, worthy to love at last!
Now let me die if I should fall from thee
Or turn once more to the stale things of Custom!"
(6487–94.)

Then comes the longing to make the vision his own, incarnated in his life. Mephistopheles insists that the apparition is nothing but a play. It is no play for Faust, but desperate earnest:

"What? Is it then for nothing I am here?
For nothing hold the bright key in my hand?
It led me through dark places, waters drear,
Lonely as death, and set me where I stand.
I will not move! I touch Reality!
Spirit, I'll fight with spirits all alone,
And win the Double Kingdom for my own.
So far she was, and now so near, so near!
I'll save her, and I'll have her doubly mine!
Help me, ye Mothers, bountiful, benign!
See her and lose her? That shall never be!"
(6549–59.)

Thereupon he tries to clasp the vision in his arms. But there is a terrific explosion, the spirits disappear, and Faust is hurled to the ground. Mephistopheles lifts him in his arms with a gibe, flings him over his shoulder and the Act closes in darkness.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAKING OF THE HOMUNCULUS

FAUST's premature attempt to seize the wraith of Helen is characteristic. The real pursuit must be a longer business, as Goethe knew from his training in Rome. And the Second Act begins to show the truth of this. That Faust should be paralysed by his first excitement is quite in accord with Goethe's symbolism elsewhere. To a craving nature like Faust's the sudden sight of a supreme value makes everything else seem valueless. Such a divorce between the ideal and the actual is the dominant theme in Goethe's great fairy-story, *The Tale of Tales*,[1] and there, as here, the man can only be cured by getting closer, through better means, to the vision that has staggered him.

The way to Helen is the way to Greece; and to Greece Faust does at last go. The spirit that leads him there is brought into life largely through the labours of the despised Wagner under the dingy roof that Faust had left in fury at the beginning of the First Part. Mephistopheles, bound to serve Faust's desires so far as he is able, carries him now, still helpless, back to the old Gothic room, unchanged save that the windows are darker and the cobwebs thicker. The pen with which Faust signed the bond to the devil still lies on the desk,

[1] *Das Märchen.*

untouched, with a dry drop of blood upon it, "a splendid find for a collector," thinks Mephistopheles. He sees the old furred gown of Faust hanging on its peg, and has a fancy to pose once more as a don, remembering how he had tried to corrupt the freshman. But he is a different Mephistopheles now; and, after Faust's achievement with the Mothers, he is compelled to help him further in the quest for Helen. She cannot be won without the aid of knowledge, and in the service of beauty and knowledge Mephistopheles' wit seems to grow, at moments, kindly, and his intellect genial.

He is, however, a demon still, and the insects, bred of dirt and darkness, recognise their master as they fly out from the old gown and are despatched by him to fitting homes in grimy parchments, potsherds and skulls. When he rings the bell, the old attendant who answers is terrified at the sight of the gigantic figure who has managed to enter in Faust's place. But Mephistopheles quiets him easily and enquires at once for Wagner, now "the first man in the world of knowledge," man of science as well as historian, but still waiting humbly and devotedly for Faust, whose room had been kept sacred since his strange disappearance years ago. Of late Wagner has shut himself up with his retorts, at work on some great experiment, till he, "the gentlest of all learned men," looks as black and blear-eyed as a charcoal-burner. He refuses to see any one, and the servitor doubts if he can admit Mephistopheles. But Mephistopheles will take no denial:

> "Not see me? I'm the man to bring him luck."
> (6683–4.)

The attendant goes off obediently, and meanwhile a new step is heard in the corridor and an old friend appears,

none other than the freshman of the First Part. He is now a Bachelor of Arts, and has thoroughly learnt the lesson given him then that life is green and theory grey. "What the Baccalaureus personifies," said Goethe,[1] denying any reference to Fichte and his philosophy of the creative Ego, "is simply the arrogance of youth, the arrogance of which we saw so much after our War of Liberation. Everyone when he is young feels that the world really began with him and really exists for his sake." The scene that follows is full of delightful irony. The Baccalaureus is such a young man as Goethe has described elsewhere; one who has sucked in ideas from the culture about him, thinks them his own discoveries and airs them accordingly. But there is no bitterness in Goethe's irony. He had sympathy with youth, and had written earlier:

> "Hate impudence in all its spheres?
> No, not in children! The world is theirs." [2]

And the poet's toleration is reflected in the bearing of Mephistopheles, who hastens to congratulate the intolerable young man, with only the gentlest sarcasm, on his enlarged experience. But the Baccalaureus has no use for congratulations from the old and no respect for experience:

> "Experience? Mere froth and fluff!
> Not to be named with living mind!
> Whatever men have known is stuff
> That simply wasn't worth the knowing.
> *Meph.* (*after a pause*).
> Worse than I feared! I knew I wasn't wise!
> But I must be an idiot, by your showing.

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[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 6th December 1829.

[2] *Sprichwörtlich.*

> "Wo Anmassung mir wohlgefällt?
> An Kindern: denen gehört die Welt."

Baccal. That's better! You've some sense, I find!
The first old man who's got a sort of mind!
Meph. I hoped to win a secret golden store:
It seems I dug up cinders, nothing more.
Baccal. Quite so. Your fine bald head, you will agree,
Is like that skull, empty as it can be.
Meph. (*indulgently*).
Do you know, my friend, how rudely you reply?
Baccal. Our German word for courtesy is . . . 'lie.'
Meph. (*who has moved his wheeled chair nearer and nearer to the proscenium*).
Up here they won't allow me light or air:
Would there be room for me among you there?
Baccal. Sheer impudence I call it, still to vie
With living men, when only fit to die!
Man's life lies in his blood, and—tell the truth—
Where leaps the blood as it can leap in youth?
Man's blood is only living, fresh and true
When from itself it can make life anew.
Something is stirring then, and something done:
The weak man drops, the man of force has won.
Just think, while we have conquered half the earth,
What have you nodding, doddering greybeards done?
Pondered and planned, elaborate scheme on scheme!
An old man's life is just an aguish dream.
Once a man's thirty he's as good as dead;
He might be shot for all that's in his head.
Meph. Well, after that, the devil may be dumb.
Baccal. The devil only lives by my good leave.
Meph. (*aside*).
I hear the devil laughing in his sleeve.
Baccal. Hear the great words of Youth when Youth is free!
'There was no world until I bade it be.
Out of his ocean bed I called the sun,
I bade the moon through all her changes run;
To light my path the day began to shine,
The hand that decked the earth with green was mine;
And in the bosom of primeval night
I bade the stars awake for my delight.
And who but I could break old Custom's bond,
Open the realms of thought that lay beyond?
Free of the world and master of it all,
I follow, where it leads, my inward call,

And speed, entranced, upon the wings of mind,
The dawn before me and the night behind,'

(*He goes out.*)

Meph. There! Swagger off, my man of genius! Oh,
How it would vex you if you did but know
That all your theory, be it false or true,
Stupid or clever—well, it isn't new!
The fellow's not so dangerous as he seems!
A year or two will sober down his dreams.
The must may foam absurdly in the press,
The new wine will be good enough, I guess.
(*To the younger spectators who will not applaud*).
The devil's wisdom leaves you cold?
Dear children, how can I defend him?
Remember, he is very old!
You must grow old, to comprehend him."

(6758–818.)

In this passage Mephistopheles, clearly, is speaking for Goethe himself, and if he seems to speak out of character, since in what he says there is something of generosity, if not of love, we should remember that the poet had intended to save Mephistopheles too, and, moreover that, since Mephistopheles is bound to serve Faust, the nobler his master's aims become, the finer must grow his own service. So again, in the next scene, we find him helping towards an act of creation, though the power of creating independently has been denied to him.

He enters the laboratory of Wagner who is absorbed in the attempt to produce through chemical combination a little living man, and his presence makes the attempt, in a sense, actually succeed. We know this from the express admission of Goethe to Eckermann.[1] But an attentive reader would discover Mephistopheles' influence from the text. For he has already told the servitor that he is the man to bring Wagner luck in his experiment, and at the close of the scene he refers to the

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 16th December 1829.

manikin as one of "the creatures we have made." Moreover, the help of a spirit is necessary here. For Goethe pokes fun at the belief that mere chemistry could create life. Wagner by himself could never produce it in his crystal flask, for all that this glows like a glowing jewel. Goethe believed, it is true, that organic and inorganic had sprung from a common source; but he did not think that we could now "pass by steps from one to the other." [1] Only Mephistopheles, a living spirit, can open the passage through which life can enter. But Wagner scorns the old method of generation:

> "The beast may joy in such, but Man, I say,
> Should find a nobler, purer source to-day."
> (6845–47.)

The living processes of Nature must be superseded for him by the synthetic work of the laboratory. Mephistopheles laughs and insinuates that by such means he will only make men who are no better than fossils, and such have been known before. But while the two are talking there actually appears in the phial a tiny man, who at once, with perfect aplomb and assurance, greets both Wagner and Mephistopheles as kinsmen of his own, both concerned in his making:

> "Well, little dad, it was no dream, you see;
> Come, press me to your heart right tenderly.
> Carefully though!—for fear the glass should break!
> That's the one drawback of the things you make.
> The works of Nature need unending space,
> But artefacts prefer a shut-up place.
> (*To Meph.*).
> Oho, Sir Cousin Scamp, are you there, too?
> Just in the nick of time! My thanks to you!
> It's luck for me you came to us to-day.

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 23rd February 1831.

I must be quick and act while act I can:
You know the short cuts—Show the way!"
(6879–90.)

Mephistopheles, whose nature it is, in spite of himself, to stimulate active life, can understand the Homunculus, as his other foster-parent, the blameless student, could never do. He shows him an immediate opportunity for action in Faust, who is lying, still paralysed, in the next room. Turning a deaf ear to Wagner's questions about the relation of soul and body, the Homunculus slips from his foster-father's fingers, hovers over Faust, and describes the dream in which he is plunged. It is a dream of Helen's mother Leda and her lover the Swan, and it represents Faust's dim apprehension of the Greek ideal, where the beauty of the flesh can be honoured by the gods of wisdom and measure, and find its place in the perfect life. The choice of the myth emphasises the fact that it is Beauty in the first place which inspires Faust rather than Morality in the narrow sense of the word, for Goethe, as we have noticed, though he never thought of the two as dissevered, knew that they were different and elsewhere he speaks of this legend as a type of their difference.[1] Mephistopheles cannot see the vision at all, and is amazed at his little cousin:

"*Meph.* Well, I must say, you have the artist's touch!
You are so tiny and you see so much!
I can see nothing.
Hom. No, of course you can't.
The North's your home, and it's the fog you want,
You nursling of grim priests and barons grim,
Only at home where all is drear and dim!
How could those eyes of yours have learnt to see?"
(6921–27.)

[1] Letter to Benth, 22nd February 1831. See the notes in the Weimar edition of the Letters.

Mephistopheles, till he has lived in Hellas, cannot be expected to understand anything of this. But the Homunculus understands instinctively all the aspirations of men. Finding Faust lost in a vision that is a prelude to the birth of Helen, he perceives that it will never do for him to awaken in the Gothic lumber-room:

"Clumsy old building, mouldy, brown, and low!
Mean narrow arches, mean grotesques arow!—
If he awakes with all that overhead,
The sight alone's enough to strike him dead.
Wild swans and woodland waters flowing clear
With women bathing, naked, free, and fair,
That was his dream: somewhere, he knows, it's true.
He'd never stand this place. He'd die!—I too,
Who like most things, can hardly bear to stay.
Hurry him off!" (6928–36.)

Mephistopheles is glad enough to go, and it occurs to the Homunculus that the Classical Walpurgisnacht, the revel of the classic witches, is to be celebrated that very night, when all the legendary figures of the Greek world come to life again on the plains near Philippi. But when it comes to the point of actually spiriting Faust to Greece, Mephistopheles, still ready enough to find reasons, good and bad, against further designs for his development, demurs. He is overruled, however, by the very Homunculus whom he has helped to create and who, for the rest, lures him on with the hope of finding, even in Greece, amorous adventures to his liking:

"*Meph.* The classic witches? They are new to me.
Hom. Of course they are, for you can only see
Romantic spectres, but your perfect sprite,
She must be classic, to be formed aright.
Meph. Then where, I ask, is your fine voyage to be?
For antique colleagues are no use to me.
Hom. North-west, I know, lies Satan's favourite clime,
But we must sail south-east, my lord, this time.
Where calm Peneus wanders, clear and blue,

Winding by hills and coverts dewy-sweet,
Where the plain stretches to the mountain's feet,
And near by lies Pharsalia, old and new.
Meph. O no! Not there! Nothing of that for me!
That weary round of slaves and tyranny!
They bore me with their wars! No sooner done
Than the bright idiots start another one,
And never see the devil who can blind them,
My friend Asmodeus, skulking there behind them,
They call them wars for Freedom and the Right:
And all the time it's only slaves who fight.
Hom. Well, the mad world must do the best it can.
Let the boy fight, one day he'll be a man.
But we've to cure the man who's lying there;
Try it yourself, if you have got a plan;
If not, let me; I'll make it my affair.
Meph. I might have tried what Brocken-charms could do,
But now your Pagan barriers block the way.
Those Greeks were really never any good!"
(6944–72.)

Instinctively, Mephistopheles shrinks from the change that Greece may make in his powers. Still, he allows his curiosity to get the better of him, and obeys the command to lift Faust in the air on the folds of his magic mantle. The Homunculus himself promises to light the way. "And I?" poor Wagner cries in great distress, "And I?" "You stay at home," the Homunculus answers, mocking, though not unkindly:

"and do your best
At clearing up the ancient text,
Gather the seeds of life men saved of old,
Compare, collate and classify them all,
Think of the sense, think still more of the style.
But I will wander through the world meanwhile
And learn perhaps how one should dot the *i*.

. . . . . .

Farewell!
Wagner (*sadly*).
Farewell! But I am heavy-hearted,
I fear I'll never see you, once we've parted.

Meph. Hey for Peneus! Who's afraid?
Sir Cousin is a doughty friend.
(*To the spectators*).
Thus in the end we all depend
Upon the creatures we have made."
(6987–7004. *End of the scene.*)

It is time now to say something of this Homunculus who is one of Goethe's most enigmatic creations. Something of his charm may be due to his very elusiveness, but Goethe himself has given indications of what he is intended to suggest. To begin with, the Homunculus understands history, and understands it from the inside. For the ordinary conception of history Goethe more than once expressed his aversion and mistrust.[1] He found it, as commonly composed, what Faust calls it in the First Part:

"A ragbag and a rubbish-heap,
At best a stilted play,
With bits of battles and tags of laws
And platitudes and pious saws." (582–85.)

Especially he was impatient of a dull unilluminated chronicle of events:

"Stupid or splendid, whatever occurred,
They call it 'World-History,' wonderful word!
. . . . . .
And youth must study with diligence
A pile of facts where it can't find sense." [2]

What Goethe wanted to discover in history were the ideals of permanent value that had moved men. His sense of human solidarity was so great that he felt these could be and should be recovered. "The best of history

[1] Compare, for example, the conversation with Luden already referred to (*Goethes Gespräche*, 19th August 1806). Luden, one suspects, unconsciously sat for certain traits in the finished portrait of Wagner.

[2] "Was kluges, dummes je geschah" *u.s.w.* in one of the *Zahme Xenien*. See J.-A., vol. 4, p. 67.

lies in the enthusiasm it arouses." [1] He had no belief in an originality that could not learn from tradition. The self-taught genius was a self-made fool. And ever since his Leipsic days the Greek ideal, expounded there by Oeser, had seemed to him the most important of all.[2] This belief grew with his growth:

> "To copy Nature, Nature fair,
> Once did the youngster seek; . . .
> . . . . . .
> But now that I am grown a man
> The thing I want is Greek." [3]

It had thus been natural for him to transform the union of Faust with Helen, treated in the legend as a mere refinement of sensuality, into a symbol of the union of the modern spirit with that of classical antiquity. The Homunculus, reading Faust's longing even in his swoon, thinks at once of the Classical Walpurgisnacht, the date which he knows instinctively. In one of the sketches that Goethe made for an announcement of the *Helena*, he laid stress on this aspect of the manikin's powers: "He shows that he holds in himself a calendar of all history. . . . He gives another proof of the profound myth-historic elements in his nature." [4] This all indicates that if Faust is to recover Helen it can only be through the help of historical study. But the kind of study intended is what Goethe himself went through in Rome, concentrated rather on art and poetry and thought than on the usual themes of historians. The pedant Wagner is left alone while the others fly off to Pharsalia, never

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 495.

[2] See his letter to Frau von Stein, 25th December 1782, for something of his debt to Oeser. Consult also the notes in the J.-A. edition to his essay on Winckelmann, vol. 34, p. 364.

[3] "Nachahmung der Natur, der schönen." The little poem is called *Studien*.

[4] *Paralipomena*, 91. (*Faust*, Insel-Verlag.)

again to see the creature he has helped to make. Nevertheless without him the Homunculus would not have been born, and without the Homunculus Faust would not have been transported to Greece. Goethe, who looked round most things, did not overlook anything, and he knew, in his large way, that pedants have their uses as well as poets in saving "the seeds of life" and so furthering the growth of man. Wagner has not lived for nothing.

But the historical insight of the Homunculus by no means exhausts his significance. The development shows that he is conceived as symbolising the whole aspiration of human life. He is like one of the formative "ideas" we have mentioned so often, a symbol of the *vis essentialis*, the *nisus formativus*, "the passionate activity through which character is made," to quote phrases which Goethe adopted elsewhere,[1] though indeed only provisionally. The Homunculus understands history as he does because he has in him this essence of manhood. And he has it in a pure form. "In clearness of intellect," Goethe pointed out to Eckermann, "he is like Mephistopheles, but far beyond him in his passion for beauty and his desire to work and to help." Nor is he "yet darkened or limited by having really become a man." [2]

At the same time the drama shows that it is man he wants to become, and it is thus that he wins our sympathy. For spirit must take to itself body, and plunge at all risks into the Actual, rather than stay shut up in the safe quarters of the unrealised ideal. However, much "real life" may for the time distort or distract it, through that life it must travel on its journey to full reality.[3] These

[1] *E.g.* in *Bildungstrieb*. [2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 16th December 1829.
[3] Compare J.-A., vol. 38, p. 51. "Bleibt es doch unsere Pflicht, selbst die Idee, insofern es möglich ist, zu verwerklichen."

considerations suggest the meaning of the phial. While the Homunculus is shut up in it he is not fully born. And it is not till he reaches the Aegean and sees Galatea that he breaks the glass and streams out in fire over the waves. It would injure the poetry to tie this climax down to any one interpretation. But it plainly implies the passage from a safe and limited sphere to a wider one, and one not to be reached except through danger. It suggests that union of man's spirit with experience, which youth has always in some form to make: it suggests the union of love: it suggests, more than anything else when the whole scheme of the drama is considered, the change of the human soul as it passes into the larger life of the universe. Of this, however, more below.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CLASSICAL WALPURGISNACHT

When the Homunculus proposed Pharsalia as the landing-place in Hellas, he knew well that it had been the background of secular strife. And when the next scene opens these memories are emphasised. The plain is wrapped in a ghostly darkness, and from it Erichtho speaks, the avenging spirit of Strife, brooding over the spectres and the lessons of War.[1]

Goethe was no lover of war, though he made little protest in practice against it. Mephistopheles' gibe in the last scene at the fine words with which men cover its folly has much of his own feeling. During the twenty years of the conflict with Napoleon he felt, at times, as though everything he cared for was being swept away. But he kept his hope alive, and went on with his work in literature and science, "nursing under the ashes the sacred fire which the next generation would need so sorely."[2] On the other hand, he never seems to have believed in any millennium on earth. Always a monarchist, at times he leaned to the notion of a benevolent despot, and once he

[1] The name of Erichtho, it is thought, was suggested to Goethe by the sorceress in Lucan (vi, 508 ff.) from whom Pompey's son enquired what the upshot of the fight was to be: but her name is also the name of a Fury, and Goethe has made her the harbinger of War.

[2] To Knebel, 24th November 1813.

thought that he might find him in the Napoleon for whom he wrote the line

"He who wills all, shall not his will be peace?"

But he came to see, even with Napoleon, the weakness of an authority won and supported by force, and took back his own line in the verses beginning

"The conqueror's will can never give us peace." [1]

So on this night, the anniversary of Pharsalia, Erichtho condemns Cæsar as she watches the phantom tents whiten over the valley. She has beheld the same vision every year:

"How often has the tale been told! And told again
'Twill be for evermore! Dominion none will yield
Unto his rival, none to him who won by force
And rules by force. For man, who never yet has learnt
To rule his own unruly self, is all too fain
To rule his fellow, bend him to his own proud will.
And yet a lesson for all time was fought out here,
Power matched with mightier power, force opposing force,
Till Freedom's million-blossomed wreath was stripped and torn,
And the stiff laurel bent to crown the conqueror.
Here Pompey dreamed his days of glory back once more;
Here Cæsar watched and thought upon the trembling scale.
Next day would test it. And the world knows now who won.

The watch-fires glow: I see their lurid tongues of flame,
The earth sends up a ghostly shimmer of the blood
Shed long ago. And still the strange gleam of the night
Lures from their depths a myriad legends of old Greece.
Round every fire hovers, half-seen, a spectral troop
Drawn from the ancient visions of the brooding Past.
Behold, the Moon is rising, past her full, yet bright,
And as her gentle radiance broadens through the plain,
Vanish the phantom tents, and the low fires burn blue."

(7012–33.)

The condemnation of Cæsar by Erichtho is notable. For Cæsar, of all men, is the one who came nearest to the ideal of a wise autocrat and the one who would most

[1] See the *Karlsbader Gedicht* (1812), and the Prelude to the *Awakening of Epimenides* (1814).

appeal to Goethe. But the descriptions Goethe wrote, even when a young man, of two antique busts, supposed to be portraits of Brutus and Cæsar, show that he could, from the first, appreciate the virtues of the republican as much as of the despot. He writes of Cæsar's face as he might have written years later of Napoleon's:

"A super-tyrant, full of force yet without defiance, immovable, irresistible, wise, vigorous, above the reach of men and events, conscious that he is Fortune's favourite, cautious, swift." [1]

But of Brutus he says: "The man is great and comes from a world of great men, . . . He will have no man for his master. He can take no joy in slaves. He must live with comrades, free men and equals. Only in a world where men are free and noble could he come into his own. And the knowledge that this world is not that throbs in his heart, and flashes in his eyes: the thought of it has lined his forehead and drawn his lips together. Here is the Gordian Knot which the master of the world could not unloose."

It is important, and impressive, to note that Goethe sets the winning of Helen and the triumph of Galatea against so stern a background as Erichtho's vision. It is one more example of his insistence that the pursuit of the ideal must take account of the actual, and that the lust of domination turns the actual into hell. In *The Awakening of Epimenides*, written when Europe had at last regained a precarious peace, he made "The Spirit of Unity" sum up the lesson in a line or two:

> "It sounds so easy, what I came to teach,
> Yet almost more than man can reach,
> A great will that knows where to yield."
> (Act 2, Sc. 10.)

[1] *Physiognomische Fragmente*, J.-A., vol. 33.

The lines might be a motto for *Faust*. For Faust has always had the despot's instinct to make his own will law. It was this that had led to the ruin of Gretchen, and, as we shall see, it makes itself felt even in his last and finest adventure.

As Erichtho is speaking, she sees above her, like a meteor, Homunculus flashing in his phial. She slips away from the approach of life as the travellers in the sky draw near, and they watch her stalking off among the ghosts as they descend.

They touch the enchanted earth, and Faust is immediately restored. His first cry is for Helen; but now, as before when he sought her in the depths, he must find her for himself. The Homunculus tells him that having accomplished the adventure with the Mothers he need fear nothing now if only he will go forward enquiring for her "from flame to flame."

Thus begins the Classical Walpurgisnacht. This provides at once a parallel and a contrast to the Walpurgisnacht in the First Part. It depicts, on the one hand, the primitive, grotesque and repulsive elements among the figures of ancient mythology; but, on the other hand, it shows also, and still more vividly, their nobility, beauty and brightness, and it ends in a triumphant consummation. Goethe himself suggested two other distinctions.[1] The original Walpurgisnacht, he said, was monarchical, and the devil the king. As we saw, at one time he had thought of ending that scene with the Court of Satan. Whereas the other was republican, with all the characters on an equal footing And, further, so many of them had crowded into his mind that the difficulty had been rather to leave out than to put in. The reader will often feel that the difficulty has not been

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 21st February 1831.

solved, and that Goethe, like many another German artist, has allowed exuberance of invention to hamper fine construction. The whole of the first Walpurgisnacht, except the alien episode of "Oberon's Golden Wedding," was melted and fused in the fire of imagination. The other, except for occasional passages and the wonderful closing revel on the sea, is not so much poetical as whimsical, shrewd, learned, often tiresomely so, reminiscent of Goethe's wide interests in art and science, and sometimes even of controversies which have now lost their interest. Such, for example, is the dispute between Thales and Anaxagoras about the respective agencies of Water and Fire in the making of the earth, Goethe's desire to recognise gradual processes rather than catastrophes, in nature as in history, leading him to support Thales. But this motive of "the water" is blended with more significant themes in the conclusion, and that conclusion is more beautiful than anything in the Walpurgisnacht of the Brocken.

Another matter must be remembered. In his original conception of this Act, and indeed till the Act itself was finished, only about a year before his death, Goethe had meant to write a scene in which Faust should persuade Persephone to let Helen return to the upper world, as once Orpheus had persuaded her to release Eurydice. But to this scene he never felt himself equal. "Faust's speech to Proserpine," he said to Eckermann, "when he persuades her to give him Helen, what a speech it ought to be, so that the goddess herself is moved to tears! That sort of thing is none too easy to make." [1] It never was made. Half-way through the night Faust disappears on a second journey to the depths, but he does not reappear until we find him at Sparta with Helen

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 15th January 1827.

in the Third Act. The centre of gravity thus came to be shifted, and the triumph of Galatea took the place of the appeal for Helen and the relenting of Proserpine.

After the advice of the Homunculus to the reawakened Faust, the travellers separate, "each on his own adventures through the fire," Faust on the quest for Helen, Mephistopheles pricked by lust, and the Homunculus looking for "new marvels." Faust, while he searches, is comforted by feeling that the air of Greece must breathe of Helen:

> "Where is she?—Yet my heart may rest!
> Though it be not the very soil she prest
> Nor yet the waves that beat against her breast,
> It is the air she breathed in that dear past,—
> Here, through a marvel, here in Greece at last!
> I knew the sacred earth on which I trod
> And even as I touched it in my sleep,
> Into my soul I felt the fire sweep
> And I stood up, as once Antæus stood.
> Behold, whatever portents cross my aim,
> Fearless I search this labyrinth of flame."
>
> (7070–79.)

Wandering on, he finds the Sphinxes, the giant Ants, the Sirens, and the gold-guarding Griffins. Here Mephistopheles has preceded him, but Mephistopheles has been shocked. True, he soon feels at home with the Sphinxes, who for their part read the riddle of his character at once. But they are practically naked!

> "*Meph.* At heart I am indecent, I admit,
> But really this Antique's a bit too much;
> The modern spirit ought to master it,
> And bring the latest clothes to hide the stuff."
>
> (7086–89.)

But Faust sees only the finer side of these apparitions:

> "Uncanny, yes, but high and noble traits." (7182.)
>
> "Great are the forms and the traditions great."
>
> (7190.)

And he turns to ask the Sphinxes if they have seen Helen. They answer, No; for they belong to an older generation. But they give him good advice: he must go and look for Cheiron, the Centaur who taught the heroes. Faust passes on and we find him next on the shores of the Peneus. It is moonlight and the river-god has been sleeping. Faust's step disturbs him and he calls to his subjects:

"Wake, awake, ye whispering rushes,
Sister-rushes in the stream!
Rustle, willows, osier-bushes,
Murmur, poplar leaves a-quiver,
Through the woven, broken dream!
See, there runs a warning shiver
Over all my flowing river,
Mars the smoothness, blurs the gleam."
(7249–56.)

Then the water-nymphs call to Faust:

"Lie down in the coolness
And find it is best
To taste in your languor
The long-vanished rest!
The rest that eludes you
We bring as our boon:
We will murmur and rustle
And lull you and croon." (7264–70.)

So enchanting is everything round him that Faust is almost ready to go no further:

'I am awake! . . . O, let them stay,
Incomparable lovelinesses,
Bringing strange rapture to my eyes!
Dreams are they, dreams, or memories?
Once, once before, such bliss was mine!
The waters, where the willows shiver
Soft-stirred and drooping to the river,
Gently with scarce a murmur glide.

A hundred rills from every side
Brim up a lakelet, deep and cool:
Girls in their flower have come to bathe,
Their lithe limbs mirrored in the pool
With every beauty doubled so.
They plunge together in their glee,
Swim boldly, wade out timorously,
And laugh and call and feign to fight.
Ah, this would be enough delight
Save that I seek a nobler sight;
Mine eyes search yonder thick-set green,
Sure the full leafage hides the Queen."

(7271–94.)

Then he sees the swans as he saw them in his swoon, with one swan, the stateliest, pressing forward to the sacred grove. At this moment the thud of Cheiron's hoofs is heard. The Centaur will not pause, but he takes Faust up on his back, and talks to him as they go of his pupils the Argonauts, and of Orpheus and Heracles, and at last of how once he had carried Helen on his back across the swamp of Eleusis. At this Faust bursts into a rhapsody of desire. Cheiron, the trainer of men for a life of action, blames him for his feverishness, but he offers at the same time to take him where he can find help. And that is to Manto the sibyl, daughter of Æsculapius, who dwells at the centre of Time, as the Mothers are throned on the Hearth of the Universe. To be made fit for action Faust must go down again to the springs that lie below action. Faust, after his manner, is sure that he can succeed: other heroes broke through time and found Helen,

"And shall not I, through my own passion's power
Call back again to life that perfect flower,
Noble yet tender, sweet yet heaven-high,
Immortal as the gods who cannot die?
You saw her once, this night I saw her too,
Gracious as fair, drawing my soul to woo.
Fire in my blood and in my heart is she!
I cannot live unless she come to me!

Cheiron. And this is rapture, friend? So may it seem
To men; to spirits it's a fevered dream.
Happy for you the hour that brought you here;
I seek a prophetess once every year,
Manto, the Healer's child. She prays to him
For grace to make all clear that now is dim . . .
Dearest of all her sister-sibyls she,
No frenzy mars her loving ministry,
Come to her now, and cure this malady.

Faust. I'll have no cure! My heart beats high with power.
I will not learn, like other men, to cower.

Cheiron. Never refuse the healing gift of grace!
Hasten! Dismount! This is the very place.

Faust. Where hast thou brought me through the dreadful dark
Across the swirling waters to thy mark?

Cheiron. Where Greek and Roman met in mortal fight,
Olympus on the left, Peneus on the right,
The mightiest realm that lost itself in sand;
The monarch fell beneath the burgher's hand.
Look up! And see the eternal temple there,
Bright in the moonbeams.

Manto (*dreaming in her sleep*).
Horses' hoofs I hear
Ring out on the sacred road,—
Is the Centaur near?

Cheiron. Yes, but arise, arise!
Open thy wonderful eyes!

Manto (*awaking*).
Come, O come, as ever before!

Cheiron. Thy temple still stands as of yore?

Manto. Still hurrying thou? No care to cease?

Cheiron. And thou still here in thy depths of peace,
While I whirl out on the open ground?

Manto. I wait and I watch, and Time whirls round.
Who is the stranger?

Cheiron. This mad night
Has swept him here in its whirling flight.
It's Helen, Helen whom he must win,
Yet he knows not where nor how to begin.
Healing he needs, all men above.

Manto. Who longs for the impossible, I love.

(*Cheiron is already far away.*)

Enter, O wild heart, enter joyously:
The low dark way leads to Persephone.
Beneath Olympus, in the hollow hall,
She listens for the secret stolen call.
Hither I once led Orpheus by my art.
Use it more wisely! Keep as brave a heart!"
(*They go down into the depths.*)
(7438–94.)

Thus Manto leads Faust to the world below for the great adventure which Goethe never wrote.

It seems clear from the poet's outline, drawn up when he was planning this Act, that, even apart from this unwritten scene, he had intended Faust to go through more significant adventures than he does. "The mad night" was to be a welter full of danger as well as of beauty, with portents like the Gorgon's head, "grown greater through the centuries," meeting Faust on the way to Orcus, and circles of luring Lamias trying to interrupt his talk with Cheiron, "captivating creatures of every kind, fair and dark, tall and tiny, slender and stately, chattering, singing, marching, dancing, hurrying, beckoning, so that Faust, had he not held the highest vision of beauty in his heart, would most assuredly have lost his way." [1] Some few traces of this plan are still noticeable; for example, we have seen Faust lured by the water-nymphs and aided by Cheiron, but most of it has been obliterated. Faust is now conceived as knowing his way well enough. The bewilderment is reserved for Mephistopheles, and it is much less momentous.

Faust's departure is followed by an earthquake and by what appears to be the upheaval of a new mountain in the night. The Sirens, already in the upper waters of the Peneus, fly down the river to the sea, foreboding disaster to the foolish creatures of the land:

[1] *Paralipomena*, 91. (*Faust*, Insel-Verlag.)

"Fling yourselves in the rushing stream,
To be swept away where the waters gleam,
To sing our song as away we are whirled,
So gay it could cure the sorrowful world!
No salvation without the sea!
Travel away to the blue Ægean
Where every joy is free!

(*An earthquake.*)

Backward the foaming waves have fled,
They will not flow in their ancient bed;
Earth opens, waters and shingle smoke!
Hasten, all of us, hasten away!——

. . . . . .

Come, noble guests, and follow our call
To the mirth of our ocean festival,
Where the waters shimmer and sway and quiver.
Laving the land for ever and ever,
Where the dew-lit moon looks down on our glee
And her mirrored light broods over the sea,
To the sacred life of freedom and mirth,
Away from the riven and tortured earth!"

(7495–518.)

No one, however, seems to obey the Sirens' call and the Sphinxes will not move: they let the Spirit of the Earthquake exult over his share in the making of the world as he heaves up a mountain on his shoulders, for he cannot go beyond the boundaries they have set. And they have seen too much in their lives to be disturbed. Meanwhile the new mountain swarms with new life, pygmies and dactyls, the Tom-Thumbs of the ancient world, beside the griffins and ants whom we have met before, all of them greedy for the mountain-metals. The pygmies take the lead, making slaves of those smaller than themselves, and compelling them to forge their weapons. Then they slaughter the herons of the neighbouring lake to get plumes for their helmets. The cranes hear the cries of the dying birds and swear to take vengeance for their kinsfolk. With this menace in the background

Mephistopheles meets the Lamias, the witches promised him by the Homunculus. They lead on the old lecher, but only to cheat him by turning into snakes and sticks and puff-balls when he embraces them. At last they rise suddenly in the air, circle round him on dark, silent, bat-like wings, and disperse. Mephistopheles shakes himself, exasperated:

> "I haven't grown much cleverer, I fear;
> Things are preposterous North, preposterous here,
> The spirits here, as there, are all debased,
> People and poets without any taste:
> The whole thing's just a sensual masquerade!"
> (7791–96.)

As he looks about, he finds that he is lost. The new mountain has cut him off from the Sphinxes, the first creatures in this strange land with whom he could really sympathise, and he does not know what to make of witches who bring their own Brocken on their backs. But an Oread from the older range of Pindus calls to him, explaining that the upstart hill is a mere phantom of the darkness; and at the same time the modest light of the Homunculus glimmers through the trees. Homunculus has found out what he wants to do, but he does not know how to do it. He has not yet seen what he had hoped for in Hellas. Mephistopheles hails him in his kindliest temper; perhaps the humiliation inflicted by the mocking Lamias has been salutary. The Homunculus explains that he is longing to break his glass and be born in earnest, but he does not think it safe in the present surroundings. However, he has heard two philosophers talking of Nature, and he will stick close to them and so discover how it should be done. But here, at the thought of actual life, the intellect of Mephistopheles flashes out—almost in the very words used by God in the Prologue:

"You'll never learn unless you make mistakes!
If you'd be born, be born in your own right!"
(7847–8.)

For all that, the Homunculus follows the philosophers, Thales and Anaxagoras, who are debating whether Water or Fire has the greater share in the making of the world. The Homunculus evidently prefers Thales who has fine things to say about Nature and who tries to end a discussion that is becoming futile. Anaxagoras, taking the dwarfs of the volcanic mountain for his clients, offers to make Homunculus their king, but the manikin hesitates:

"*Hom.* What says my Thales?
Thales. Can't advise it.
The deeds of dwarfs are dwarfish too:
With great men even dwarfs grow great." (7881–83.)

At this moment the cranes return to take vengeance on the murderous pygmies. Anaxagoras, indignant at any attack on his people, prays for help to the Moon-goddess. But his philosophy does not prevent him from losing his head in strange fancies and he believes that the moon has answered only too readily and is actually coming down to earth, growing momently redder and larger before his eyes. Even the Homunculus thinks there has been some great convulsion and that the shape of the mountain is really altered. But Thales points out that the moon is shining as calmly as before, assures him that the upheavals have all been imaginary, and invites him to the festival on the sea.

This part of the Act has been, one must admit, considerably overweighted, nor is the detail always telling enough for the effect that Goethe presumably intended, a visionary phantasmagoria of primeval beginnings with the forces and the delusions that build up the world as it

appears to men. Nor is the next scene entirely effective where Mephistopheles reappears alone, to discover the Phorkyads huddled together in a dim cavern under the oaks and rocks of Pindus, three monstrous women with only one eye and one tooth between them, as horrible as anything in Northern imagining. They are the daughters of Chaos, as he is the son. On the strength of the relationship he borrows their appearance, and we shall see him so disguised in the Third Act. Meanwhile he grins at the ugly figure he makes:

> "I'd better hide from humans: I'd do well
> To frighten devils in the bog of hell." (8032–3.)

But the concluding scene is played out on the Aegean, and here there is no prose and no pedantry. Moreover, the grotesque and the grisly elements, the cruel and the merely deceptive have all disappeared. Memories of the Mediterranean and the halcyon days on its shores are here fused with the poet's deepest hopes and desires. In the rocky bay to which Thales, the pioneer of science, leads Homunculus, the moonlit waters are the waters of life at their fullest and freest, and the airy capricious fancies heighten our sense of wonder and delight. The beauty and passion with which this part is inspired are largely due, as we have already noted, to the inspiration Goethe felt in his love for Ulrike von Levetzow. Under that stress his

> "old experience did attain
> To something like prophetic strain."

All through the scene the moon is supposed to be held motionless at the zenith, and the moon is here taken by Goethe, again following Plutarch, as a symbol of what is above the earth though beneath the heavens. To these worshippers she is what the Virgin is to the redeemed in the sunlight of the climax that closes the whole drama.

We have Goethe's own authority for saying that Proteus (who amuses himself by every fantastic disguise and by an unseen voice passing from place to place, and who at last carries the delighted Homunculus into the perilous gulfs that set him free) stands for the protean force of Nature, mocking the efforts of man even while it helps him, moving in ways we can neither arrest nor understand completely, eluding grasp and sight. Long before the Act was written Goethe had pointed out to Riemer how well Proteus in the Odyssey could symbolise Nature.[1] And when he published his essay on *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, in 1790, he chose for a motto the passage from Job which was always a favourite of his: "Lo, he goeth by me and I see him not; he passeth me also, but I perceive him not." Nereus, the old sage of the sea, recalls Goethe himself, much as Prospero recalls Shakespeare. Both Nereus and Prospero speak for their creators, both are conscious of transcendent powers, both, at the end of active life, are exasperated by the failure of their wisdom to cure the baseness and folly of mankind, yet both are sustained by the rare sweetness of human love and by a resignation that has the quality of religious faith. Both too have a very human irritability and a very noble patience.

In other ways also, we are reminded of *The Tempest*. Goethe once quoted with approval a French critic who had noticed the importance, even in the First Part, of "those half-formed creatures which, like Shakespeare's Caliban, owe their weird existence to the poet's imagination alone."[2] The fondness for such creations seems to

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, vol. v, 1st March 1805.

[2] In *Oeuvres Dramatiques de Goethe* reviewed by Goethe himself (J.-A., vol. 32). The extracts, with this sanction, are all of great interest, especially in the way they confirm the inspiring influence of Italy.

have increased with him, as it did with Shakespeare. There may be a profound reason for this. Creative artists may be haunted, as the years advance, by premonitions hinting at new forms of existence. For if all Art is anticipation, as Goethe believed it was, they may come, as they follow their genius further and further, to anticipate things too strange for this world, things that require entirely fresh symbols, ominous, delicate, comforting, fantastic beyond all previous imagining. In the last work of Sophocles and Shakespeare, as in the last work of Beethoven, the world of experience seems at times to break up altogether. Awe-inspiring visions meet us, while a certain playfulness runs in and out, as though there were easy entrance somewhere to a haven of security.

In the scene before us Goethe makes Proteus welcome the wildest of fantasies,

> "The very best stuff an old poet could find,
> The odder they are, the more to his mind!"
> (8225–6.)

Sheer fun will merge into mysterious suggestion. In the account of the Cabeiri, for example, Goethe is often laughing at mythological disquisitions of Schelling's, but also he has put into these curious beings a poetry that makes them fit to preside over all human effort and human growth, straining after the Unreachable and creating themselves for ever, "though they know not themselves who they are."

And when, finally, the glass of the Homunculus is shivered at the foot of Galatea's throne by the passionate longing for the Beauty that moves the world because the world desires it, so prismatic is poetry that the waters on which we move have become for us the waters of Death, lit and flamed upon by love:

"Tell no man, tell wise men only,
For the world might count it madness,
Him I praise who thirsts for fire,
Thirsts for death and dies in gladness!" [1]

Over the entire revel there breathes a spirit of adventure as well as of release. "Every advance is a gamble," said Goethe once, "and not least the advance in self-realisation." Nature, when she drives her creatures to develop, "doubles the stakes at every throw." [2] It is at the close of this scene, and of the whole Act, that the Homunculus is born. In the moonlit ocean about the car of Galatea his glass is shattered and he is shed in light among the waters. For Galatea, as we said, while from one aspect she recalls the human Ulrike, from another represents the spirit of Beauty which awakens love and the power of growth in all living things. Through that love the Homunculus finds his euthanasia, the death that is birth. And the old Nereus, pestered for advice by Thales on his behalf, can only tell them of Proteus and of her, the beings who alone bring him solace in the weary round of his fruitless work:

"*Nereus.* Is that the voice of a man I hear?
Oh, the fierce rage deep down within my heart!
Phantoms men are, struggling to reach the sky
And doomed for evermore to be the same!
Long years I could have lain in godlike rest,
But something drove me on to help the Best.
And when the work was done and I could see,
I saw for all my counsel—vanity!'
Thales. And yet, O grey sea-king, men trust in you.
You are our sage. O, send us not away!
Look on this spark; he's like a man, it's true,
But he'll revere your counsel and obey.
Nereus. Counsel? What good has counsel ever done?
In a deaf ear the wisest word is dumb.

[1] See above, Chap. III.
[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 14th June 1809.

A deed may bring its own curse ten times o'er,
The folk are still as stiff-necked as before.
I warned young Paris as a father would,
When he went roving in his lustful mood.
Proudly he stood upon the Grecian strand:
I told him what my spirit saw at hand,
The smoke of heaven-high burning, and the glow,
The bulwarks blazing, death and hell below,
The judgment-day of Troy! Fit theme for verse,
For centuries a glory and a curse!
The sinner laughed at all the old could tell,
He followed his own lust, and Ilion fell,—
A giant corpse, long-tortured, cold at last,
For mountain-eagles a superb repast.
Ulysses, too!——I told him all I could,
Fair Circe's wiles, the Cyclops' cruelty,
His own delay, his comrades' levity,
All, all I told him,——was it any good?
Late, late enough, forspent and all but lost,
The kind waves cast him on a kindly coast.

Thales. True, such behaviour brings a wise man pain,
But yet, if wise he is, he tries again.
One grain of thanks in its pure bliss outweighs
The load of thanklessness from many days.
And now we beg you for no trifling boon:
This babe would fain be born, and well, and soon.

Nereus. O, do not mar my fairest, rarest hour!
Far other thoughts have held me all day long:
All day my heart has heard a halcyon song.
To-night, to-night, I summon all my daughters,
The Dorid Nymphs, the Graces of the waters.
Not all your Earth, Olympus hath not power
To show so bright, so exquisite a flower.
Gracious and free, over the waters wide,
On dragons and sea-horses they will ride,
In the vast flood so tenderly at home
It seems to bear them on its lightest foam.
And Galatea comes, the fairest far,
In opal lights on Venus' pearly car.
For since the Cyprian left the world alone,
In Paphos dwells my child, is worshipped there,
As Venus' self, the true, acknowledged heir,
Queen of the temple and the pearled throne.

Away! In this one hour of blessedness
No hate within my heart, no bitterness!
Seek mighty Proteus! Ask him; he will know
How man can best be born, and change, and grow.
(8094–153.)

He turns away from them towards the sea and on the margin of the waters they all meet, Thales and the Manikin, the old Man, Galatea, and Proteus. Here the pageant runs up to a climax of love in all its pathos, its joy, its evanescence, its permanence and creative power. The triumphal car of Galatea is borne forward by the sea-nymphs and the snake-charmers who guard it through the centuries in her secret home:

"On the rocky shore of Cyprus
We dwell in the hollow caves,
Unshaken by the earthquake,
Unhurt by the sea-god's waves,
Where immortal zephyrs blow.
And as in the old days long ago
In our own hearts our joy we know,
We guard the car of our Queen.
And we bring, through the whispering hush of the night,
Through the woven maze of the waters bright,
The fairest of daughters fair,
By the men of to-day unseen.
Crescent and cross may wax and wane,
Lion and eagle slay and be slain,
Little we care,
Lightly we follow our Queen.
One may be up and the other down,
Thrust each other from throne and crown,
Harry the land and sack the town,
We, as of yore,
Bring our beautiful Queen once more.

Sirens. So swift ye move, so light ye are,
Circling round and round your car,
Diving now beneath the waters
Round the throne and along the wake,
Like the rippling curving coils

Of the winding water-snake.
Come, O Nereids! Lithe and joyful,
Tameless women, sweet and wild!
Come, O Dorid maidens, bringing
Galatea, your mother's child!
Her face is like her mother's face,
Grave as the high gods be,
Noble with immortality,
Yet like a maid of human race,
Soft with a mortal woman's grace." (8359–90.)

Then at last comes the moment for Galatea to meet her father. It is only for a moment: the dolphins will not wait, nor the waters. But that one Moment pays for years. And the coming of Galatea brings fruition to the Homunculus. He has seen Beauty, and with one throb of recognition and ecstasy he rushes to meet her, breaks himself, and is born.

" (*Galatea draws near on her pearly car.*)

Nereus. It is you, my darling!
Galatea. O, Father dear!
Stay, dolphins!—His eyes!—They hold me here.
Nereus. Over and gone already! Already they draw us apart.
Wider and wider the circles sweep.
What do they care for the pain of my heart?
O take me but with you, out over the deep!—
Yet one glance is so dear, so dear,
One moment pays for the barren year.

. . . . . .

Nereus. They are gliding away and away,
Face to face no more with me.
Linked in long-drawn curves,
In stately ordered array,
The numberless host winds over the sea.
But Galatea's pearly car,
Still I can see it, far and far;
Through the press it gleams like a star,
The light of my love will stay!
Still shimmering bright and clear,
For ever true, for ever near,
Far and far away!

Homun. Over this faery sea
All is beautiful, all is dear,
Wherever my lamp may be.
Proteus. Over this living sea
Now first and fully I can hear
Your lamp ring gloriously!
Nereus. What mystery opens before our eyes?
What wonder out of the flood will rise?
What flames round the shell at my daughter's feet?
It flashes and softens, wild and sweet,
As though it were pulsing with love and burning.
Thales. Homunculus! Proteus hath led him astray!
Those are the throbs of the master-yearning:
Soon we shall hear his passionate moan,
He will shatter himself at the radiant throne!
He flames up, he flashes, he flings himself forth!
Sirens. A wonderful light burns higher and higher!
What marvel has birth?
The wavelets are broken in glistening spray,
Our limbs are aglow on our way,
The night is flooded with fire.
And Love has created all!
Hail to Him, hail!
Hail to the ocean and the waves,
Where the pure fires swirl and glow!
Hail to the waters and the flames,
Where the strange adventurers go!
All. Hail, mild winds that float and fall!
Hail, deep caverns of mystery!
Earth and air and fire and sea,
Elements, all hail to all!" (8424–87.)

Thus the Second Act closes, with the power of love transforming and fulfilling "the elements."

CHAPTER XIV

THE HELENA

When the Third Act, the first to be finished, was published separately (in 1827) as "An Interlude to Faust," it was called *Helena, a Classic-Romantic Phantasmagoria.* The sub-title was well chosen. The Act begins like a Greek play, with long iambic lines and rhymeless choric songs, it passes into lyrical dialogue written in free rhyming verse, and it ends with a chorus suggesting the antique once more. Much of the latter part Goethe meant to be accompanied by music, and he thought Mozart the only musician who could have composed what he wanted. And the variety of form springs from the content. Past, Present and Future are brought together in Faust's imaginative experience. The sweep of the Act covers "three thousand years," as Goethe noted himself,[1] from the Homeric world on through the Middle Ages and the incursions of the Northerners down to the death of Byron for modern Greece. All this is possible because Faust has the poet's mind which "forms the consistence of what is to be from what has been and is," which "says to the past, Rise and walk before me that I may realise you." [2] It is this quality which gives that inner unity to the whole, described by Goethe himself as "a Unity of Time in the higher sense."

[1] To Boiserée, 22nd October 1826.

[2] Walt Whitman. From the prose preface to *Leaves of Grass.*

That the content is meant to be imaginary, not in any sense material, but only a "phantasmagoria," is indicated by the dream-like effect noticeable throughout the Act. The threats of battles are unreal: the characters can grow up in a night and vanish in a moment. From the beginning Helen is a Being, as Mr Santayana points out, of "ghostly semi-consciousness and glassy beauty," and Faust's love for her is not that of a man for a woman, but of a humanist for an ideal. Like Plato, Goethe used the word "love" for such enthusiasm as well as for human passion, and neither of them intended it merely as a metaphor. In an epigram of his old-age Goethe plays on the likeness and the difference:

> "'Still philandering at your age?
> Shame on you, old man!
> Who's it now? Sweet Kate it was
> When your course began.
> Who makes your days now just as dear
> As in your far-off youth?'
> Look up!—She loves me! Look, see there!
> She is the Truth!" [1]

A woman friend of Goethe's reports a conversation[2] in which, speaking of his visit to Italy, he told her that he had "wanted to penetrate so deeply into the nature of Art that his vision of it should become objective, and his whole being, his entire personality pass over into the contemplation of Beauty and be lost in it." "I told him," she adds, "that this was simply a continuation of Agathon's rhapsody about Intellectual Beauty." The rhapsody, we may be sure, appealed to Goethe, who, for all his belief in sensuous love, understood also, by experience, the Platonic impulse.

[1] From the lines beginning "Wenn ich auf dem Markte geh'" in *Sixteen Parables*.

[2] *Goethes Gespräche*, 12th July 1795.

But this passion for classicism is also a romantic passion, and the mingling of the two themes is deliberate. Goethe intended to deny their incompatibility. He had moved, in his development and partly through the influence of Schiller, far beyond the idolatry of Græco-Roman art which had dominated him in Italy. Both forms, he now believed, were of infinite and therefore equal value. The consciousness of self, which Goethe, following his friend, held to be the root of Romanticism, was an irreversible step in the growth of the race. Romantic poetry could not, and should not be expelled by a renewed understanding of the earlier, clearer, simpler, more "objective" spirit. The two should be lovers, and thus, from their meeting, a third might be born.

This fruitful union of two conceptions, one pointing to the future and one to the past, a modern novelist might represent by a chain of images and of memories interweaving, incessantly and rapidly, with influences, not any more vivid, from the present. Goethe has suggested it by picturing a return of Helen's spirit to the actual land of Greece and her encounter with the living Faust. At one moment she feels herself back in Homeric Sparta, at another swept into the being of a stranger, at another only an eternal Dream. When the Act opens, immediately after the triumph of Galatea and the release of the Homunculus, she appears before the palace of Menelaus, alone, except for a company of captive Trojan women, her attendants, who have learned to adore her. Faust's descent to the Shades has thus been, so far, successful. Helen has come back to earth.

In the outline for the unwritten scene where this marvellous boon was to be granted by Persephone, it was stated expressly that Faust must rely on his own efforts

to win her when she came. But for the moment he does not appear. She is living her old life over again, believing that she has just landed after the ten years at Troy. Menelaus has sent her on before him from the ship to make preparations for a sacrifice, though he has not designated the victim. Helen enters the palace alone, but presently emerges in anger and perplexity. She had found the house silent and deserted, until, beside the glimmering ashes on the hearth, she had seen a huge veiled woman, sitting idle and motionless. Reproved, the woman had only answered by waving her arm, as though warning Helen to go. The queen had turned from her in contempt, and was at the foot of the steps to her marriage-chamber when the grim figure stood up, tall and gaunt, with hollow, blood-shot eyes, and barred the way. This figure is really Mephistopheles in the disguise of the Phorkyad which he had assumed in the previous Act. The Chorus dread him, but submit, in the end, as to a witch in the secrets of Menelaus; but Panthalis, their leader, though she never guesses the truth, soon comes to divine that he may be brought to serve her mistress. At their first meeting, however, there is nothing but mutual defiance. The Phorkyad strides out from the palace after Helen's speech, acting the faithful housewife, showing deference to the wife of Menelaus but defending the home from pollution by such creatures as the wanton Trojan captives,

> "A war-begotten, slaughter-nurtured brood,
> Man-hunters, more seducers than seduced."
>
> (8776–7.)

They, in their turn, mock at his hideous shape and bemoan their fate, lovers of beauty, forced to endure this. They have suffered much already, and now, side by side with Helen's beauty, they must look on a monster.

The wrangling between the chorus and Mephistopheles revives in Helen old intolerable memories, and these the Phorkyad stimulates by ruthless questioning till everything in her old life comes back to her again: her rape as a girl by Theseus, her recovery by her brothers, her marriage to Menelaus, her second rape by Paris, her double apparition, at once in Egypt and in Troy, her union with the dead Achilles, phantom with phantom, until, confused and fainting, she falls into the kind arms of the chorus-leader, half aware that she is only a Dream. But when she recovers, the Phorkyad salutes her reverently, for the sight of Helen in her home has begun to transform Mephistopheles:

"Shine out from the flying clouds, O sun of our flying day!
Half-hidden, thou wert a rapture, now thy full glory flames.
The world unfolds before thee, wide as thy glance is fair.
Ah, though they sneer at my foulness, Beauty I know right well." (8909–12.)

Then he proceeds to pave the way for Faust. He tells the queen and her women that Menelaus means to sacrifice them all, and that no escape is possible unless they will fly with him to a new strange castle, built by a chieftain who has descended on Lacedæmon from the North. Helen consents, though with some misgiving, for she discerns in the Phorkyad "a Countering Spirit, turning Good to Ill." On her consent they are immediately enveloped in magical clouds, and when they can see again, they find the Phorkyad gone and themselves in the inner courtyard of a Frankish castle. There really is such a castle, it may be noted, looking over the valley of the Eurotas in the mountain-village of Mistra. Goethe knew about such places from his reading, and they are apt for his theme. To the traveller in Greece few sights are

more fascinating. Suddenly, to the mind's ear, the bells of the centuries chime together. Throughout the *Helena* indeed, as in the Court-scenes, but to a still greater degree, we are conscious of Goethe's attempt, full of interest even where it fails, to compress an epic content into the framework of a drama. He wants to bring the centuries together, to show us how the spirit of Helen, the spirit of classic beauty, enchants the world down the ages, and yet how she is thwarted and limited and cannot save herself from her own limitations and the perversions of her adorers. There is more than a hint, there are incessant signs that in Goethe's view the classic world alone was not enough for the completion of the classic ideal. The cruelties and the weaknesses of ancient Hellas are emphasised by Mephistopheles, and Faust, when he appears at last, appears as a deliverer. Goethe never lost a passionate sympathy for the civilisation and art of ancient Greece. But two points had become clear to him. First, the inability of the Greek ideal to extirpate Greek savagery, so that Helen has good reason to fall fainting among the memories of her past. Next, the inadequacy of that ideal itself to the whole nature of Man. Helen must be brought to Faust and the classic spirit fertilised by the romantic.

The two recognise each other at once. Lynkeus, the watchman, type of the poet's keen eye for visible beauty, acknowledges Helen at his first glimpse of her as the light of the world, and when Faust welcomes the queen to his fortress her own longings for peace and fulfilment are satisfied, to her own astonishment. Preceded by pages and squires, golden-haired and ruddy, who bring a throne and canopy for the queen, Faust comes down the castle-steps to greet her, giving all he has won and all his willing people into her hands. She calls him to her on the throne,

and the charming episode follows where Faust teaches her to rhyme. And it should be noted that, as he does this, he almost bids the moment stay:

"*Faust.* The Spirit looks not forward, not behind,
Here in the Present,—
Helen. Here our joy we find." (9381–2.)

In four brief couplets her immediate surrender to his wooing is symbolised:

"*Helen.* I seem so far away and yet so near,
Telling myself so gladly, I am here!
Faust. How can I breathe, how say what should be said?
It is a dream, and Time and Space are fled.
Helen. My life is gone, and new life comes to me;
I know thee not, and yet I live in thee.
Faust. O question not our fate and its strange beauty!
Though life were but a moment, life's our duty."
(9411–8.)

Here again the duty of living "in the moment" is emphasised, and the fact that in this "moment" Faust seems to get beyond the limits of ordinary Time shows that his problem, also Goethe's and our own, how to make existence satisfactory, is one stage nearer solution.

But upon this the Phorkyad breaks in, announcing that Menelaus is marching with his troops to recover Helen. Faust declares that there is no danger; but that even if there were, he has everything ready. Then at a signal his army enters, so that Mephistopheles may judge of his power and his supporters:

"Nay, thou shalt see them undivided,
The heroes ranged for watch and ward:
For only he deserves a woman's favour
Who holds her by his power to guard."
(9442–45.)

The last two lines anticipate the later,[1] and much finer, saying at the end of the drama,

> "That only he deserves his life, his freedom,
> Who wins them every day anew."

Then Faust gives orders to his barons for the defence, division and administration of the land. Nothing further, however, is heard of Menelaus, and indeed Faust's words to the Phorkyad, denying that there is any danger, have admitted, all but openly, that this king, who never appears, is only a dream within the dream. There is significance in the alarm and the preparations to meet it, but only to show how well Faust realises in theory that the beauty he has won must be sustained by continuous and corporate effort in a united land. This is confirmed by the Chorus:

> "He who longs for the loveliest,
> Let him be valiant of soul,
> Able, sure of his weapons.
> Has he won to himself by his wooing
> All that earth holds highest,
> He cannot possess her in peace.
> Spies are cunning to lure her away,
> Robbers daring to wrench her away;
> Let him look to his guard!
>
> Therefore I praise our prince;
> Wise and brave, he has won to his side
> Men to obey his word:
> Well for themselves, and well for their lord,
> Thanks for him and glory for all.
>
> Now who shall tear her away
> From the hero who holds her?
> Within he hath builded a wall,
> Without he hath marshalled a host.
> Gladly we give her, gladly." (9482–505.)

[1] That is, later in the drama. It was probably written earlier. See Appendix.

This conviction, that Beauty needs the well-ordered community, a conviction always held, as Mr Santayana observes,[1] by the Greeks, points forward also to the end of the *Helena*. Faust's love for Helen is contemplative and "ideal," and, when consummated, out of it is born a spirit, which drives him back into the "real" world of action, as the Platonic philosophers had to go back into the Cave after their vision of the Good. But the time for this has not yet arrived: it is still the visionary hour. Faust turns to Helen and speaks the lines which show how deeply a "romantic" poet could be inspired by a classical conception of happiness and the beauty of a classical landscape. The whole earth is at Helen's feet, and Hellas the light of it:

"Joy shall it give to every nation,
This land of the excelling sun,
Now that my queen once more has conquered
The sceptre that of old she won,

When the reeds whispered by Eurotas
And the shell broke for her to rise
And mother, brothers drew back dazzled
Before the radiance of her eyes.

One land hath offered thee her flower,
One land alone hath bowed to thee.
Now lies the whole world in thy power,
But give thine own the primacy!

Though still the sunrays are but coldly smiting
The jagged summits and the ridges bare,
The goats will range with the first green, delighting
In the wild shrubs and the sweet scanty fare.

The deep springs open, and the brooks go racing
Down through the glades to gladden all around,
Over a hundred hills the flocks are grazing
In the far hollows of the dimpled ground;

[1] *Op. cit.* It is curious that he does not also observe that it was precisely Goethe's conviction, and that the *Helena* turns on it.

And, one by one, to crop the tall cliff-grasses
The long-horned cattle follow, cautious, grave;
Good shelter can they find among the passes
In many a rock-walled, vaulted mountain-cave.

Pan guards them there, and in the dewy coolness
Of bowery clefts the Nymphs of Life will lie,
While upward, close-set through the forest fullness,
The trees strain, longing for the ampler sky.

Old woods are they! Stark stands the oak-tree, growing
Age-long, each gnarled bough in its stubborn way;
The slender maple, all her sweet sap flowing,
Lifts her bright burden lightly in her play.

In the cool circle of the shadow gushes
The warm milk, mother-like, for lamb and child;
Ripe fruit is near, where the plain guards her bushes,
And in the hollow trunk the honey wild.

Here joy, descending to each generation,
Smiles from bright faces still without surcease;
Each is immortal in his age and station,
And sane and gladsome are they, and at peace.

So thus, from day to radiant day unfolding,
The father's strength blooms in the child again,
And still we ask, the marvel still beholding,
If they are gods, or if they are but men?

Even so among the herdsmen seemed Apollo,
And fair as his the fairest shepherd-face;
For where pure Nature leads and men dare follow
All worlds can meet together and embrace.

(*He sits beside Helen.*)

This have I won, and thou too, won it wholly;
Now be the outworn Past behind us flung!
The morning of the young world claims thee solely;
Remember the high Gods whence thou art sprung!

No palace prison thee, no fortress capture!
Fresh is the earth's young strength eternally:
For us, for our delight and our long rapture,
In Sparta's neighbourhood lies Arcady!

Lured to this sacred land by my deep yearning,
Thou camest for a golden destiny;
Now thrones and palaces to forest turning,
Arcadian be our bliss, our liberty!" (9514–73.)

The last lines give the signal for a change of scene to a forest in Arcadia where "leafy arbours run up to mountain-cliffs." Faust and Helen are hidden. The Trojan women are sleeping on the grass, when the Phorkyad comes to wake them and tell them that a son is born to Faust and Helen and is already a grown lad. This son is Euphorion, the Spirit of Modern Poetry, whom we met before, incarnated as the Boy-Guide, in the First Act. Eckermann's prudent objections to the disregard of chronology and individuality had been waved aside by Goethe; such a spirit could not be tied down to any one place or person.[1] But here more specially Euphorion represents Byron. Goethe had always intended that the halcyon dream of Faust and Helen should be broken by a new poetic spirit, restless and demanding action. This spirit was not to be a faultless creature like the Homunculus: he was to be like his father Faust. But he was to drive Faust on to further development. The scene, however, had not been worked out till after Byron's death. Goethe told Eckermann that he "had sometimes planned the ending in one form, sometimes in another," and "once" he had "got it really good." "Then the years brought me Lord Byron and Missolonghi, and I was only too glad to let the old stuff go." "I could take no one but Byron," he added, "to represent our modern age in poetry. Without question he is the greatest genius of the century." "And then he is not antique and not romantic, he is like the present day. This was the kind of man I needed. Then he suited me

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 20th December 1829.

also because of his unsatisfied cravings and his longing for war." [1]

Eckermann's reports must sometimes be used with caution, but there is no doubt that Goethe's admiration for Byron's power was intense, though by no means unqualified, and it was an admiration informed by sympathy. In many ways Byron must have reminded the old poet of his own youth; but also, and this was more important, he believed that Byron had begun to redeem his passions by turning to the life of action, and that of a kind which appealed with especial force to Goethe the Phil-Hellene. Lastly came the tragic end of a life extreme in all its phases, an example, after Goethe's heart, of what he called "dæmonic." And this personal and human sympathy gave the needed impetus to the poet. It seems indeed quite possible that to Byron's death is due the definite resumption of the Second Part. Certainly in the spring of 1824 the *Helena* was still a mere fragment, and Goethe was doubtful whether he would ever go on with it at all. That same year Byron fell in Greece and by 1827 the *Helena* was completed and published.

The coming of Euphorion begins a further transformation both in the Chorus and in Mephistopheles, until at the end of the Act Mephistopheles attains his highest point, and the Chorus, as Goethe said himself, give up the girlish character appropriate to their classical conception and say things "which they never had thought of and could never have thought of." The inconsistency was intentional, and we may be reminded of Goethe's own remark that if a great artist does something odd he probably does it on purpose. The new rush of romantic feeling surprises the Chorus both for what they feel them-

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 5th July 1827.

selves and for the change that it brings to the monstrous Phorkyad. They have just been singing in answer to Mephistopheles' announcement, one of their stately odes in which Goethe tried, not unsuccessfully, to recapture something of the classical dignity, though he exaggerated the supposed classical calm. "Suddenly an enchanting melody rings out from the cavern, as though from the strings of a lyre. They all hear it and are deeply moved." It is the signal for the climax and completion of the whole Act, and it is Mephistopheles who speaks first to welcome it:

"Hear the lovely ringing measures,
Fling the ancient tales aside!
All the old Olympus glories,
Let them go, their day has died.

No man now can take your meaning,
For we ask a higher thing:
From the heart must spring the music,
If our own hearts are to sing.
(*The Phorkyad falls back to the rock.*)

Chorus. Can this melting sweetness move thee,
Thou gray monster of our fears?
We, like sick folk healed of sickness,
Soften to the joy of tears.

Let the bright day lose its brightness,
So the dawn within us rise:
Our own hearts awake to give us
All that all the world denies." (9679–94.)

Then Faust and Helen come out from the cavern, and with them the maker of the music, the young Euphorion, carrying his lyre. He has set the crown on their happiness, but he will not stay with them. He must pursue something—women, freedom, danger, and at last heroism. From this point to the close of the Act the poetry is so rich, so finely woven with mingled joy and grief, and the

dramatic movement so swift that it will be best to translate continuously before making further comment :

"*Euph.* Many, so many
Light-following fauns!
Up, all and any,
Far over the lawns!
For the hunter am I
And you girls are the game.
Chorus. Come softly, and try;
Thou wilt find we are tame.
For the end of our joy
And the goal of our bliss
Is to clasp and to kiss
Thee, beautiful boy!
Euph. Right through the thickets,
Past boulder and tree!
What yields at a touch
Is worthless to me!
Only what's fought for
Brings ecstasy.
Helen and Faust.
Restless, masterful, and wild!
Who will tame this tameless child?
Hark! The sound of the hunter's horn
Over wood and valley borne!
Hark! The clamour and the cry!
Hark! The ringing call!
Chorus (*running in separately*).
He's outrun us, swept us by,
Put our troop to shame and scorn,
From our laughing circle torn
One, the maddest of us all!
Euph. (*dragging in a girl*).
Thus I snatch the thorny blossom,
Thus I battle for my bliss,
Thus I press the angry bosom
And the angry mouth I kiss;
She shall learn my strength by this.
The Girl. Let me go! A spirit's power
Burns beneath this veil of mine!
Not a lightly broken flower,—
Here's a will to mate with thine!

Thinkest thou I am in prison?
Fool, to boast thee overmuch!
Hold me fast!—a flame has risen
And I scorch thee with a touch.
(*She flames up and flashes in the sky.*)
Follow where the zephyrs fly,
Follow where the caverns lie,
Seize the vanished prize!

Euph. (*shaking off the last flames*).
Caught in the forest,
Rock-fettered, rock-bound!—
I am young, and I long for the open ground.
I hear the winds soar
And the waters roar,
Far-off they sound!
And O, to be near!
(*He springs higher up the cliffs.*)

Helen, Faust and Chorus.
Wilt thou vie with the deer?
We tremble for thee!

Euph. Further and further yet, higher and higher,
Till I look on the world of my desire
Opening for me!
Now I know where I stand!
Deep in the heart of Pelops' land,
Kin to the earth and the sea.

Chorus. Canst thou not linger
Here in the pines?
Come then, and gather
Ripe grapes from the vines,
Grapes and gold apples
And figs growing wild.
Ah, in this lovely land
Stay, lovely child!

Euph. Dreaming of peace to-day?
Dream on, if dream you may!
War is the master-word,
Victory, the shout I heard!

Chorus. He who in peace
Can hunger for strife,
The blossoms of hope
Have dropped from his life.

Euph. Those whom this land hath bred,

From danger to danger led,
Free men, a reckless brood,
Squandering their heart's best blood,
Honour that cannot flinch,
Stainless of soul,—
Now let her warriors
Win to their goal!

Chorus. Look, look up! How high he's clambered!
Yet, though distant, nowise dwindled,
Like a bronze-clad hero, blazing
Till the air is all enkindled.

Euph. Never a rampart, never a wall!
Trust in his own heart, each and all!
Towers are strong, but mightier still
The steel of a man's enduring will.
Would ye live unconquered, free?
Arm, and fight for victory.
Amazons your women be,
Heroes be your sons!

Chorus. Heavenly poesy,
Higher and higher,
Up to the sky!
Shine out, the fairest star,
Far from us, far!
Yet we hear her song,
Yet we look and long,
Low as we are.

Euph. But I must do what no child can,
In war the boy becomes a man.
His soul has known the company
Of valour, spoken with the free.
Forward! See there!
The way is clear,
The laurelled way of victory!

Helen and Faust.

Scarcely summoned into life,
Scarcely given to the day,
And from the topmost dizzy height
Must thou plunge into gulfs of pain?
Alas, are we
Nothing to thee?
Is our bond but a dream, and vain?

Euph. Hark! There is thunder on the sea!

Thunder again from the mountain slopes,
The stricken field where I would be,
With struggling men and shattered hopes,
Dust and clamour and agony,
Death!—That word
Was the call I heard.
Now I know it once for all.

Helen, Faust and the Chorus.
Misery! O misery!
And must thou die?
Was that the call?

Euph. Can I look on, aloof and safe?
Give me my share beside the brave!

Helen, Faust and the Chorus.
Ah, thou goest to thy grave!
Too proud, too bold!

Euph. Ay! But see!
My wings unfold!
Thither, O thither!—
Let me fly to them, free!

(*He flings himself into the air. For a moment his garments bear him up and his head is irradiated, leaving a track of light.*)

Chorus. Icarus! Icarus!
Grief as of old!

(*A beautiful young figure falls at his parents' feet, and we may fancy that in the dead we recognise a well-known face. But suddenly the body disappears; the aureole rises to heaven like a comet, while the garments and lyre are left on the ground.*)

Faust and Helen.
Grief untold!
All our happiness
Gone, gone!

Euphorion's voice (from the depths).
Leave me not in the realms of darkness,
Mother, leave me not alone!

(*Silence.*)

Chorus (Song of Mourning).
Not alone, where'er thou dwellest!
For we know who thou must be.
Nay, though thou hast left the daylight,
Not one heart shall fall from thee.
Yet we scarcely can bewail thee,

Envying we chant thy fate;
Still, in calm or stormy weather,
Song and soul were high and great.

Born to every earthly splendour,
Pride of race, a giant's power,
Thine own self thou didst surrender,
Thine own youth thou didst deflower:
Eyes to see and brain to fathom,
Heart for all the hearts that moan,
Love of every noble woman,
And a music all thine own.

But thy whirlwind passion flung thee
In the snare that saps the will,
Wrenching thee from law and duty,
Self-banned, though a Titan still.
Till at last thy thought struck deeper,
Set the purer impulse free,
Bade thee covet nobler prizes,
Win them,—yet it might not be.

Who has won them? Ask it, sighing!
Dark the oracles that come
On the nations' day of mourning
When the folk bleed and are dumb.
Yet prepare once more for music,
Up and listen for the strain!
Earth has borne brave men for ever,
She will give them us again.

(*Complete silence. The music ceases.*)

Helen (*to Faust*).

An old true saying proves itself once more in me:
Beauty and Happiness may not dwell together long.
The links are snapped, the links of life, the links of love.
I mourn for both; sadly I turn and say, Farewell!
And fling myself once more, the last time, in thine arms.
Persephone, take back the mother and the child.

(*She embraces Faust. Her form vanishes. The veil and mantle are left in his hands.*)

The Phorkyad (*to Faust*).

Hold fast to what is left you of it all!
The mantle, clutch it tight! For spirits pluck

Already at its fringes, stealthily
They'd sweep it from you to the shades.—Hold fast!
It is not the divinity you've lost,
Still, it's divine. Up! Use the priceless gift,
Use it and rise! For it will carry you
Through the clear sky, above the common world,
Swift, sure and swift, so long as you endure.
Farewell! We meet again, far, far from here.

(*Helen's garments change into clouds, they envelop Faust, lift him into the sky and pass away with him.*)

The Phorkyad (*taking up Euphorion's mantle, tunic and lyre, comes forward into the proscenium, and holds them up*).

Another lucky find I've made!
The flame, of course, has fled, I know it,
But still we need not be afraid.
Here's still enough for many a poet,
And jealousy for half the trade:
The genius they must do without,
But I've the clothes to hire out.

(*The Phorkyad sits down against a pillar in the proscenium.*)

Panthalis. Haste now, ye maidens, rescued from the spell at last,
The desolate magic of the old Thessalian hag,
The rush of whirling, wildering words that dazed us all,
Deafening the ear, deadening the heart and mind still more.
Down, down to Hades, down! Did not our Queen go first,
Gravely and swiftly? Let us follow in her steps,
Like loyal maidens. We shall find her at the throne
Of the Unsearchable.

Chorus. Truly, 'tis well for the Queens, the Queens!
Even in Hades they stand with the highest,
Heart in heart with Persephone.
Ah, but we, we in our dimness,
Far in the spectral asphodel meadows,
Under the slender lines of the poplars,
Faint on the fruitless plains.
What shall we do with the length of our days?
Pipings of bats in the darkness,
Dreary, desolate, ghostly whispers!

Panthalis. Those who have earned no fame, nor felt one high desire,

Their home is with the Elements. Go thither you!
But I go with my queen: I burn to follow her.
Not merit only, the true heart will save the Self.
(*She disappears.*)

Chorus (*together*).
Free once more of the light and the sun,
Saved from the darkness of Hades,
Our selves shall vanish, our lives live on
In the life of Nature eternal,
Claiming us now, as her we claim.

One Part of the Chorus.
Now through all the murmurous shiver, trembling whisper of the leafage,
Sweetly shall we dance and gently lure the life through myriad branches
Welling from the roots beneath us. And we'll have our fill of flowers,
Decking all our fluttering tresses for a glory and a grace.
When the fruit drops, folk will hasten, hasten swiftly, folk and cattle!
Crunching, munching, gathering, grasping, eagerly they'll crowd together;
All will bend and bow before us, as the greatest Gods of old.

Another. Some of us will hang and hover by the rock-wall's bright smooth rampart,
Nestling, stirring in faint ripples where the quick, clear echoes rise;
Listening unto all the voices, songs of birds and reedy pipings,
Straightway answering all the voices, even Pan's tremendous cry!
Be they murmurs, murmuring gently, be it thunder, thundering back,
All the dread refrain repeating, threefold, tenfold, echoing.

A Third Part.
Sisters! We are eager-hearted, we will hurry with the streamlets!
For the radiant far horizon lures us yonder with its blueness,
Downward ever, ever deeper, hurrying on until we water

First the pastures, then the meadows, then the garden
and the home.
There across the wide clear distance slender-shafted
cypresses
Mark the bright pools of the river, lift their tall heads
to the sky.

The Fourth Part.

Ye may wander where it please you! We will circle,
we will rustle
Round the green close-planted hillside, round the vine-
stocks and the vines.
All day long we'll watch the dresser at his loving
patient labour,
Digging, pruning, binding, praying to the gods and
great Apollo.
Little Bacchus cares, the idler, for his loyal servant's
labour!
Lying in the bowery cavern, toying with the youngest
fawn!
All he needs to soothe his languor, charm his deep and
dreamy leisure,
Lies beside him in the wineskins, in the casks and
golden goblets,
Stored from far-off days primeval in the coolness of
the cave.
But the other gods were toiling, and the Sungod toiled
the hardest,
Sending warmth and dews and breezes, till they filled
the full ripe clusters.
Where the dresser worked in silence suddenly the life
is leaping,
Rushing on through all the vine-trails, hurrying from
stock to stock.
Creak of baskets, clash of pitchers, groaning of the
heavy butts!
All are hastening to the wine-vat, hastening to the
lusty dance.
There the pure and sacred riches, there the soft and
bloomy clusters
Must be trodden down and trampled, crushed and
beaten into foam.
Suddenly the clang of cymbals and the joyous clink of
tankards!

Dionysus has unveiled him, comes with all his mysteries,
All his light goat-footed satyrs, all his wanton satyr-women,
With Silenus' long-eared palfrey braying lustily the while.
To the winds with law and order! Cloven-foot shall tread them under,
All our senses reeling, tossing, stunned and deafened with the cries!
Drunkards stagger to the goblet, head and paunch are full to bursting;
Here and there if one rebuke them, he but makes the tumult wilder.
Empty all the last year's wineskins! Fill them with the new-made must!

(*The curtain falls. The Phorkyad in the proscenium rises like a giant, takes off the high shoes of tragedy, lays aside veil and mask, and shows the face of Mephistopheles, prepared to comment on the scene by way of epilogue.*)"

(9767–10,038. *The end of the Act.*)

In the concluding song the Chorus have returned to the antique temper, but with something added, a pantheism that again reminds us of Shelley and the lines in the *Adonais* where he dreams that the voice of Keats

" is heard
In thunder and the song of night's sweet bird."

Goethe, as we have seen, did not think that death was the end of life. But neither had he any fixed or dogmatic creed about a life beyond. He could therefore let his imagination play freely with the most various ideas. Though he does not say it in so many words, there is often an implication, as here, that death might offer the chance of taking all physical phenomena, so to speak, in the rear, and thus of understanding them in a way impossible through mere external observation. In the present passage we find this pantheism, always upper-

most when he thought scientifically, united with the polytheism in which he delighted as a poet. Spirits that had too little force to desire or endure the burdens of personality might, he often liked to fancy, be reabsorbed into the life of the elements. Only the stronger characters were capable of individual immortality: for character, it is to be observed, not genius, is the test given by Panthalis. Here we are in touch with Goethe's modern speculation. But the chorus recurs also to that simple delight in sheer existence which pervaded Faust's address to the classic spirit. No romantic and no modern experience, so Goethe believed, need lessen this. It was not for nothing that in his youth he had been inspired by Rousseau. He felt that even leaders of Romanticism must go back to the vision of a life in harmony with Nature, that harmony of body and soul, of impulse and virtue, of sense and reason, which is always man's dream of Paradise. In his poem "*General Confession*" he made his disciples ask forgiveness for having left any chance of happiness unused: he had no doubt that the Good and the Beautiful as well as the True were both included in the Whole, and in that Whole men must learn to live. Schiller had written of children, in an essay which Goethe said had taught him much: [1]

"They are what we once were. We were once Nature, and our culture must bring us back, by the path of Reason and Freedom, to Nature once again."

And in the same spirit Goethe himself wrote in the essay on Winckelmann, his forerunner as a Hellenist:

"When a man is sane and healthy, when he feels that his nature is acting as a whole and that he is living in a Whole which itself is great and noble and beautiful . . .

[1] *Über naive und sentimentalische Dichtung* ("*The Poetry of Instinct and the Poetry of Feeling*").

then, if the Universe could see itself, it would cry aloud that it had reached its goal and shout for triumph at the glory it had won. For what would be the good of all the stars and the galaxies, all the comets and the nebulæ, all the worlds that are made and a-making, if in the end there were no happy man alive to enjoy instinctively his own happiness?" [1]

But along with all this Goethe never ceased to feel the tragedy of life. Its significance depended on the effort after this ideal, but that effort would always be frustrated. Euphorion perishes, Helen vanishes, though they leave their mantles behind them. And it is memorable that the one to perceive the value of the legacy and make Faust keep hold of it should be Mephistopheles. Throughout the Act, indeed, Mephistopheles, though presented in the hideous guise of the Phorkyad, proves himself both perceptive of beauty and ready to help. It is here that Goethe shows most plainly what he meant by saying that in the end Mephistopheles would be saved. Faust and Helen between them have carried him a long way. At the same time he is, on the whole, passive, both in Sparta and in Arcady, and his brilliant wit is in abeyance. This Kingdom of Dream, after all, is not his element. It is both too beautiful for him and too tenuous. He is part of the Will to live in physical life, and it is not until the dream is breaking that he recovers his peculiar powers. Then, and before that dream is darkened by full contact with actuality, he is at his finest. He regains his humour when he picks up Byron's cast-off clothing, and when he speaks to Faust he is the Archangel. He thrusts what he can of the Dream into the Actual and he thrusts Faust with it. He is aware of the danger, but

[1] J.-A., vol. 34, *init.* See the notes for the influence of Winckelmann on Goethe in his youth.

he has the foresight that does not shrink. Of all the scenes which Goethe might have written none is to be reckoned a greater loss than the Epilogue that Mephistopheles might have spoken as the Act closed.

For students of Goethe's biography the return of Faust to the "real" world of action recalls inevitably his own return from Italy to Weimar where he was to work for the rest of his life. The price he had to pay we may realise when he tells us that he had sobbed like a child every evening for days as the time was drawing near for him to leave Rome. He would like, he said to a friend, at least to be buried by the pyramid of Cestius, and he actually made a drawing for his tomb there. The place he desired was reserved for two English poets of whose work he knew little or nothing, but who would have understood his fundamental ideas far better than the Byron he praised so generously. Shelley and Keats, as sensitive as Goethe to the spell of beauty and the evanescence of delight, heard the call to action as he did. Life was not all dream and sweetness. A man must leave the world of the Nightingale and the Skylark, of Galatea and Helen, to do the best he can with the ordinary waking world of men. And Goethe knew he could not do this in a spirit of patronage, but as one of themselves:

> "Why did I seek the way with toil and prayer
> Unless I hoped to bring my brothers there?"

These lines were written before he went to Italy, they were to form part of "The Secrets," and he put them afterwards in the "Dedication" to his collected poems. The stanzas that come just before them show how clearly he recognised the temptation besetting every powerful artist to leave the Philistines alone and live in his own superiority, and how decisively he set himself against it.

The Truth who possesses the Veil of Poetry laughs at him for imagining that he is the only one who knows her. "I will not name thee," he had begun in the reserve of arrogance,

> "'I will not name thee. Others call upon thee:
> I hear them cry, I hear them name thy name,
> And every whipster thinks that he has won thee
> When he would shrivel but to see thy flame.
> Ah, when I lost my way my friends were many,
> But when I found it I was all alone,
> I could not share my secret joy with any,
> Thy glorious light could only be my own.'
>
> The goddess smiled: she smiled and spoke, 'I ask thee,
> Was it not needful, was it not well and wise
> Thus for one little moment to unmask thee?
> Scarce art thou free from all the grosser lies,
> Scarce hast thou mastered thy first childish folly,
> And thou must be a superman, too holy
> To do the duty of the common day!
> Art thou so different from thy fellow-men?
> Nay, know thyself and live at peace with them.'" [1]

Twice over, here and in the address of the Earth-Spirit to Faust, Goethe uses the word "Superman," each time with more than a touch of contempt. Whatever minor faults of egotism and impatience he may have had, at bottom his pride was to serve among equals. "I have been no man's master," he wrote in his old-age, "but perhaps, to some of the young men, I have been a deliverer." [2]

[1] "*Zueignung.*"

[2] "*Noch ein Wort für junge Dichter.*" This brief essay, rather a note than an essay, was not published till after his death.

CHAPTER XV

FAUST AND THE EMPIRE

In the next Act, the Fourth, we return to the Empire, as in the First, and the scene is once more in the mountains. A cloud floats in, pauses a moment on the rocky ledge of a lonely range, divides, and discloses Faust. Then it rises, leaving him alone. As it passes it takes the shape of a goddess-like woman, Juno it may be, or Leda, or Helen. But in one last wisp of it Faust seems to discern the form of Gretchen:

> "Am I mocked,
> Or is it my youth's joy, long, long foregone?
> Deep in my heart the old sweet fountains open.
> The young airs of the morning's love remember
> That first, swift-found, scarce-comprehended glance,
> Outshining, had I held it, every gain.
> Like the soul's loveliness the fair shape rises
> Unhurt, unbroken, into the topmost blue,
> Drawing the best of me to follow it." (10,058–66.)

This is the first time in the Second Part that Gretchen has been spoken of, and even now she is not named. But the lines are enough to show that she has never been forgotten, and the reticence that withholds the name is in character. When outlining the plan for the scene Goethe had written "Clouds, Helen, Gretchen," but in working it out he kept the name unspoken, and the discretion makes the passage the more touching. To

Goethe it was natural that in Faust's feeling Gretchen should be linked with Helen. For always he felt, as he wrote to a friend in his twenties:[1]

"When a man feels his whole nature alive and at peace and blessed with true love, then, through a secret subtle sympathy, every interrupted friendship, every half-forgotten tenderness, springs into life again."

At this moment of pause between the life of emotion and the life of action Faust experiences a kind of vital peace that he has never felt before and is never to feel later. There is something of the same feeling in a letter of Goethe's own,[2] written just before he returned to Weimar from his last visit to Marienbad. He was leaving Ulrike (whom he compares to a slender wisp of cloud), but only, so he hoped then, for a time. The letter is to a friend about a book on plants, and Goethe writes:

"I could hardly tell you the effect produced on me by re-reading this book and thinking it over in the open and the quiet, under the light free air of the hilltops. To use a brief and pious phrase, for the moment the peace of God came to me, soft and strong enough to reconcile me with myself and with the world."

But on Faust's brooding Mephistopheles breaks in. The mood of the *Helena* has faded, and he is down to his ordinary level again, once more the tempter, not the archangel. Like a true Northern goblin he has come over the world in seven-leagued boots, which hurry away by themselves when he takes them off. He thinks the mountains hideous, "just like hell," and begins to discuss their strata (a topic which Goethe could seldom resist), but only to assert, against Faust, that they are all volcanic.

[1] 14th October 1770.

[2] To von Esenbeck, 22nd August 1823.

"So like a devil," thinks Faust. Mephistopheles, however, is only arguing for victory, as he admits, and soon turns to a more congenial subject, the question of Faust's own desires:

"But now, to come to sense at last,
Did you see nothing pleasant as you passed
Over this same earth's surface? Far and wide
You saw, to quote the gospel-story,
The kingdoms of the world and all their glory;
But I suppose you saw with sullen eyes,
You restless soul, whom nothing satisfies!

Faust. O no! A splendid vision drew me on.
Guess what it was!

Meph. Well, that's quite easily done!—
I'd choose myself a ducal town,
With victuals and drink for core and crown,
Twisted alley and high-roofed street,
Cabbages, turnips, onions, meat,
All jammed in the market's tiny space,
With blow-flies buzzing all over the place,
Where the fat joints lie on the butcher's tables
Under the queer little pointed gables,
And where you'd find at every hour
Bustle and stink at the top of their power.
Then fine broad squares on either hand
That plume themselves on looking grand;
Lastly, beyond the town-gate's bar,
Trim suburbs stretching for ever so far.
I'd have my carriage to roll along,
Enjoy it all as I bowl along,
By all that liveliness kept alive,
The fuss and the buzz of the human hive,
And whenever I chose to ride abroad,
Ever the centre of the horde,
By a hundred thousand souls adored!

Faust. No, that could never give me peace!
One helps the people to increase,
To take their comforts their own way,
And even be cultured, if they may;
And then they're rebels, one fine day.

Meph. Why, then I'd build me, beautiful and bright,
For my own self, a Palace of Delight:

Woods, hills and valleys, meadows all around
To be my sumptuous pleasure-ground:
Smooth velvet lawns, by green-walled alleys graced,
Straight paths, and shadows in the best of taste,
Neat waterfalls, with rocks to suit my mind,
And glancing jets of every charming kind;
Tall fountains, stately in their spray,
And a hundred little ones hissing away,
Splashing and spluttering in their play.
Then I would frame delightful nooks
For lovely women with the freshest looks.
That's the eternity to fit my mood,
Choice company in a peopled solitude.
Women, I said, since, once for all, for me
It's plural that the pretty things must be.

Faust. Sardanapalus of our times, I see!
Modern and cheap!

Meph. Well, who's to guess your aim?
It must be set upon the peak of fame.
In your long flight you passed the moon quite close,
It's her you hanker after, I suppose?

Faust. By no means! This round earth of ours
Has room for many a glorious deed.
My mettle calls for something meant
To be the world's astonishment.

Meph. Glory, I see! Oh, yes, quite so:
You've been with heroines, we know.

Faust. Power is my goal, and mastery my meed!
The glory's nothing, all is in the deed.

Meph. But you'll find shoals of poets, all the same,
To tell posterity about your fame,
And so through folly set more fools on fire.

Faust. Not the least inkling of my plan!
How should you know what men desire?
Your bitter nature, cutting, cold,
How should it know the needs of man?

Meph. Just as you like. I'll do as I am told,
If only you'll confide your whims to me.

Faust. I looked out on the wide and open sea
And watched the waves that towered mightily,
Then broke and fell, scattering with a roar
Up the broad spaces of the level shore.
They roused my anger, like a lawless soul

That, though it's learnt the Right and loves the Good,
Is swept by passion and by fevered blood
Into a waste of ruin past control.
I thought it chance: but looking close I saw
The tossing breakers check, and then withdraw
Back from the goal they had so proudly won:
And then once more the mad game was begun!

Meph. (*to the audience*).

I can't say that there's much in this that's new:
For quite ten thousand years I've known it's true.

Faust (*continuing passionately*).

On through a million channels they will press,
Barren themselves, to bring more barrenness,
Surging and heaving, flooding uselessly
Over the dreary kingdoms of the sea.
Wave after wave will triumph, wild with force,
Then shrink, and nothing's won by their mad course!
A sight to fill us with despair and shame,
Unbridled forces, power without an aim!
Then soared my soul beyond herself, swung free,
Here is the battle, here the victory!

It could be done! For all their mad excess,
They'll glide by low hills with a soft caress,
Fierce though their anger, arrogant their might,
Yet proud against them stands a little height,
A little fall will level them perforce.
I pondered, and my spirit shaped her course:
She knew the glorious bliss that she would gain,
Shutting the lordly billows from the plain,
Narrowing the limit of their barren play,
Heaping them on themselves, and far away!
So, step by step, clear grew my purposed will;
That is my wish, and that thou shalt fulfil!"

(10,128–233.)

Mephistopheles is ready with his aid, but of course in his own manner. During their absence things in the Empire have gone from bad to worse. Civil war is raging, and here, Mephistopheles insists, lies Faust's opportunity. He must intervene at once, help the Emperor to victory and then ask for a fief on the coast where the experiment of reclaiming the land can be tried.

Thus for the second time the theme of war enters the drama. But here Goethe's treatment of it is ironical as well as symbolic. Magic is used, freely and absurdly, with Mephistopheles, not Faust, directing it: the whole business, the poet seems to say, is at once horrible and nonsensical. And the result of it is nearly as bad. For when the Emperor has won he does little but divide his power among incompetent, grasping and superstitious leaders. This, we may take it, is an essential part of Goethe's final judgment on the twenty years' warfare that he had witnessed in Europe. He saw how easily it turns men into brutes and hypocrites, and he had satirised it already in a pungent set of verses written after the Napoleonic campaigns but withheld from publication during his lifetime:

"The angels fought for us and the Right,
But the angels were worsted in every fight,
Devil above and angel under,
And the devil walked off with the whole of the plunder.
Then all our good folk fell to prayer
And the Lord looked into the whole affair.
Said God the Son,—(and we know that he
Saw the matter plain from eternity),—
'They'd better remember that they're at war
And not be so damned particular:
Fight like the devils until they've won,
Then sing *Te Deum* when all is done.'
We didn't wait to be told it twice,
And lo! the devils were whacked in a trice
So now we say complacently,
'It pays to behave like a devil, you see.'" [1]

Along this road Mephistopheles lures Faust, and it nearly leads to the ruin of his soul when salvation seemed to be in sight. He works on everything he can find in Faust, on his vanity which is small, on his sense of unused ability which is great, and on his eagerness for work and

[1] *Zahme Xenien*, J.-A., vol. 4, p. 128.

desire for power which are enormous and increased by sympathy for the Emperor and contempt for his counsellors. When his scruples are overborne Mephistopheles supplies him with three symbolical champions, "Smite-All," "Seize-All" and "Keep-All," and with these "mighty men" at his back Faust appears and offers his services to the Emperor. In the battle that follows Mephistopheles, after a brief success for the Imperial troops, calls attention to the signs of imminent disaster, and so manages to secure the effective command for himself, although the Emperor, who fears the dark skill by which none the less he is glad to profit, refuses him the official title and the marshal's baton. For that refusal Mephistopheles cares little: once he is actually in command he brings all his trickery to bear until the battle is won in a fantastic turmoil of deception, cruelty and plunder.

The use made of victory is shown with the same ironic symbolism. The chief plunderer among the three "mighty men," found looting in the headquarters of the rebel army, is disowned and dismissed by the dignified Imperial suite, and the Emperor himself, giving thanks for the triumph, finds it easy to draw a veil over any undesirable magic that has led to the highly desirable end:

> "If here and there some trickery was shown,
> Still it was we who won, and we alone.
> Phenomena are useful in a fight,
> Blood-rain and meteors falling from the height,
> And hollow caves full of mysterious cries
> To hearten us and daunt our enemies.
> The vanquished fly, and mockeries greet their fall,
> While we, the conquerors, praise our God for all.
> Unasked, unbidden, from a million throats
> *Te Deums* pour their gratifying notes."
>
> (10,857–66.)

With that he resolves to make a fresh start, confident that he is now performing his duty:

> "A prince, when young, may waste his time in mirth,
> But years will teach him what the Moment's worth."
> (10,869-70.)

He proceeds to appoint his great hereditary officials. They are to have prestige, privilege and power, but no duties of any importance. Here the tradition and facts of the Holy Roman Empire are followed, but also parodied. The Grand Marshal is to usher in the Imperial banquet, the Grand Chamberlain to carry the golden goblet, the Grand Steward to direct the Imperial kitchen, and the Grand Cupbearer the Imperial cellar, while the keystone is placed on the structure by a dignitary who unites in one person the offices of Archbishop and Chancellor of the Realm, so linking Church and State for ever. These five princes are provided with lands and revenues, their jurisdiction is supreme, they have the right to choose the successor to the Throne, and they are all to be irremovable. The final touches are given when the Archbishop, shocked at the Emperor's league with Satanic sorcery, declares that his one chance of salvation lies in granting to the Church all the land where the battle was fought and won, with its mountains and forests, its pastures, rivers and fishponds. The conscience-stricken Emperor agrees, but his penitence turns to exasperation when the Archbishop, after taking leave, hurries back to explain that, since the seashore has been granted to the discredited magician, the Church must ask for its tithes and its taxes. Why, says the Emperor, it isn't there itself, it's still in the sea! No matter, replies the Archbishop, our cause is just and we can wait. And the Emperor is left to his forebodings:

"Before I've done
The Empire will be gone to Kingdom-come."

With this last hit at the old system the Fourth Act closes. If Goethe was no democrat, at any rate he had no more regard for the outworn clothes of an aristocracy than his young disciple Thomas Carlyle.

CHAPTER XVI

THE CLOSE

Between the Fourth Act and the Fifth many years are supposed to have elapsed, and at the opening of the Fifth we begin to get a view of Faust's practical work and its results. Much of his great idea has been accomplished. Land has been reclaimed and dykes and canals built. The fact that with the enterprise has been mixed ruthless magic of the kind shown in the last Act should not surprise us. Every attempt to realise an ideal must, so Goethe always held, be a failure if judged by its own standards, and with most men a dismal failure. When he was a young man, indeed just about the time that he began the writing of *Faust*, he planned a drama on Mahomet, and his own account of his conception throws light on the present work.

He had been struck, so he tells us in his Autobiography, by the tragedy in the lives of reformers when they try, as they must, "to influence the rough everyday world." They put themselves on a level with it, often honestly believing that the end justifies the means, and then find that the means are destroying the end. He took Mahomet, "whom I could never think of as an imposter," for a type, and the drama was to proceed from the Prophet's first great conception of Nature and God, on through his efforts to make men true believers by

persuasion, down to his use of force. "In the Third Act he conquers his opponents, makes his religion the official religion, and purifies the Kaaba from idols. But everything cannot be accomplished by force, and he must now have recourse to cunning as well. The earthly element increases and spreads, the divine retreats and is obscured. In the Fourth Act Mahomet follows up his conquests, his doctrine becomes a pretext rather than an aim, every kind of method must be used, cruelty is not lacking. Then a woman, whose husband had been executed by his orders, poisons him. In the Fifth Act he realises that he is poisoned. His perfect calmness, his return to himself and his higher views, make him worthy of admiration. He purifies his doctrine, puts his government on a firm basis, and dies." [1]

Even if Faust had never sold himself to the devil, we should not expect a man of his grasping nature to do better than the Prophet. It was this greed that had brought misery to Gretchen, it is this that hampers the making of the free self-controlled community that could be a fit home for the spirit of Helen. It is the desire for power, we should notice, not for fame, that is the curse of Faust. Goethe had once thought of having him tempted by fame, but he gave this up, perhaps because it was so little of a temptation to himself. And Faust does not want to use the power ignobly; on the contrary, it is for an idea worthy of Hellas. That is why in the end, like Mahomet, he can return to it in a purer form, rejecting magic entirely just before his death. Lewes, in his *Life of Goethe* (still the best biography available), regrets that the poet never completed his plan for the drama on Mahomet. It is curious that Lewes did not observe how much of it is incorporated in the Final Act of *Faust*.

[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Bk. 14, *ad fin.*

The reclaiming of the land is a symbol as well as a fact. It is in itself a good work; but also it typifies in general the control of reason over chaos. This may be felt in Faust's first outburst of enthusiasm for his scheme, where he spoke of the uncontrolled waters as though they were the surges of man's spirit; and it becomes still clearer from his concluding speech when, with death before him, he finds sustainment in the thought of the self-directing energy that will ennoble the millions for whom his work is to make room. The theme, while it keeps the earthly close of the drama in touch with daily life, gives to that life a peculiar dignity. The spectacle of a nation's home built up out of the threatening waters had stirred Goethe's imagination when he stayed in Venice on his first visit to Italy and had his first sight of the sea, and it is natural to infer that this gave him his first idea for the subject in *Faust*. In Venice, also, he had felt the foundations of the city to be the monument "not of a Prince, but of a People," [1] and thus the idea was expressly associated with that free co-operation of which Faust can discern the vision but against which he sins incessantly.

The Act opens with a quiet scene that indicates alike the scope of his achievement and the questionable character of his methods. A traveller who, years before, had barely escaped drowning on the shore then beset by the sea, is now returning to visit the old couple who had rescued him, Philemon and Baucis, still living in their linden-shadowed cottage on the dunes. Once it had been surrounded by desolation. Now he is shown, to his astonishment, instead of the weary sands and the barren ocean, "a place of Paradise,"

> "With smiling meadows, field on field,
> Gardens, woodlands, villages." (11,095–6.)

[1] *Ital. Reise*, 29th September and 9th October 1786.

A line of blue far away indicates the new harbour where the ships are gathering for the night, like birds winging home to the nest. The kindly old Philemon is full of admiration for what has been done. But the shrewder, more talkative housewife shakes her head. Strange visions, she tells us, were seen at night, and ominous sounds were heard. She is sure there has been murder and now there is tyranny. The great man has cast covetous eyes on their little plot. Her easy-going husband points out that the Emperor had granted the coast-line to Faust and the Emperor can do no wrong; but such arguments cannot satisfy Baucis. She pours out to the traveller all the misgivings she has felt ever since the beginning of the enterprise when the workmen would toil daylong to no effect and then suddenly, after a night of mystery and horror, the work would be found completed. Philemon reminds her that they have been offered another piece of land on the reclaimed soil in exchange for their old home. But she will not hear of it. She will stick to the dunes she has always known, trusting, with her husband, in the Lord. And the old man leads the way to evening-service in the chapel.

The next scene is a bitter comment on the simple people's faith. Faust, now a very old man, is pacing up and down restlessly in front of his palace. The voice of his watchman is heard, Lynkeus the keen-sighted, whose name shows that Faust has not lost the power of vision he possessed in Greece. Lynkeus is now stationed on a tower by the coast, and announces, through his horn, the setting of the sun and the gratitude of the sailors for the achievement that has transformed both land and sea. But Faust hears also the bell from the little chapel which belongs to the old couple in their own right, and this tiny enclave in his dominion works on his lust for power.

He is still pursued by the old temptation to escape the actual, and Mephistopheles, now a captain in the merchant-fleet, is still at hand to suggest the means. He and his three "mighty men" have had plenty of practice in the ways of commerce. This evening their big ship is home again after a prosperous voyage:

"*Meph.* Now have we proved our strength and skill,
Pleased if we've done our master's will.
Two ships we had when we sailed away,
Twenty we bring to port to-day.
And by the cargo that we've won
All men can know the deeds we've done.
On the open sea the open mind!
There none can live who looks behind;
He must learn to follow and learn to grip,
Tackle his fish and grapple his ship,
And once he has made himself master of three,
The fourth he will conquer easily,
And the fifth will find him ill to fight,
For everyone knows that Might is Right.
Not 'how' but 'what' is all one asks!
I'm quite at home with seamen's tasks,
For war and trade and piracy
Are three in one and one in three,
The same from all eternity." (11,171–88.)

But the master receives them with black looks. In vain Mephistopheles endeavours to cheer Faust by reminding him of all that has been accomplished. His whole delight in his work is destroyed by the one piece of ground that is not his own. Sophistically, he blames the old couple for the obstinacy and selfishness which are his own vices; and Mephistopheles is only too glad to aid and abet him. He will clear out the obstructive pair and Faust need not distress himself: he can compensate them afterwards with a new home:

"*Meph.* Why worry yourself at this late hour?
Aren't you a Colonising Power?

Faust. Go then, and get them out of the way!—
You know the charming little plot
I chose out for the old folks' lot.
Meph. We'll move and settle them again
Before they've time to feel the pain.
A nice new house will make amends
For the force we use to shift our friends." (11,273–81.)

With that Mephistopheles goes off to his work accompanied by his three villains. But if he helps Faust to deceive himself, there is no dust in his own eyes. He turns to the spectators with a grin:

"The old, old story, ever the same!
Naboth's vineyard over again!" (11,286–7.)

The scene shifts to a moonlit night. The watchman is singing on his tower in words that spring from the valiant joyous heart of Goethe himself:

"I was born to observe,
To keep watch from a boy;
I am sworn to the tower
And the world is my joy.
I gaze on the distant,
I look on the near,
On the moon and the starlight,
The wood and the deer.
In all things beholding
The beauty divine,
I have joy in the world
And this old heart of mine.
Glad eyes, ye are happy,
Whate'er ye have seen!
Let it be as it listeth,
So fair it hath been!" (11,288–303.)

A pause follows; and then, in sharp contrast to the song, an example of the suffering and cruelty in the world. The watchman sees the cottage of Philemon and Baucis go up in flames. He cries out in distress,

giving warning of the fire, but it blazes too quick for help to come in time. Faust in his palace hears, and his heart misgives him. This was not what he intended. Still, he reassures himself with the reflection that he can build a tower in the place where the lindens stood, and that the old couple can spend the evening of their days in the comfortable new home he has provided for them and be sincerely grateful for his generosity. But upon this Mephistopheles and his three appear: they are returning with the full story to Faust: they had not meant to do any harm, but circumstances have been too much for them; Baucis and Philemon fainted from fear, and the stranger who was with them, determined on defence, only made matters worse; in the conflict that ensued the house was set on fire and now husband and wife, their helper, their home and all their goods have perished in the burning. It is the history, in little, of many a struggle between great expanding powers and little communities bent on independence. Parallels will crowd on the student of history, past and present. Every empire, our own included, has passages of the kind to its lasting discredit. Goethe himself may have been thinking of Napoleon, possibly also of Frederick the Great,[1] and, could he have foreseen the Great War with all to which it has led, he would have felt no surprise, only sorrow. He might have claimed the prophetic power of a true *Vates*. But the symbolism is not limited to such world-tragedies. It typifies what happens constantly whenever a strong nature that is not also a pure one, seeks to accomplish something in the practical world. And, what is important, Goethe neither condones this

[1] Freytag (*Neue Bilder aus dem Leben des deutschen Volkes*) suggests that Goethe may also have been thinking of Frederick's work on the Canal of Bromberg. See Carlyle's *Frederick the Great*, Bk. 21, c. 4.

evil element nor because of it condemns the spirit of enterprise. What he does is to drag into the light its accompanying vice, and pierce to its underlying cause.

But the episode is itself the cause of growth in Faust, and it is worth noting how profoundly Goethe has transformed the old puppet-play at this point. In the puppet-plays the Watchman is Faust's former servant Caspar, who, as the city-watchman, only passes by to announce the hour of his doom. But with Goethe he has become Faust's own keener insight, bringing him face to face with what he has done and so offering him the one chance of release. Confronted with what has happened through his fault and feeling the near approach of death, he looks back over his unsatisfied life from the day when he cursed the natural world and the patient heart and signed the bond with Mephistopheles. And for the first time he breaks with Magic. Before, in spite of his protests, he has always accepted any profit won by Mephistopheles and his agents: now he will not touch it. He turns from them with a curse, and, when they leave him, he longs to be rid of them entirely, free from the illusion that he can force his will on Nature, and from the superstition which is the Nemesis of that. When the spirit of Care, his intimate and inveterate enemy, assaults him, bringing the paralysis that comes from a sense of the worthlessness in all things, he resists her without one "word of sorcery." He takes up his work with renewed vigour, but as a man among men, not as a magician. Then, when he least expects it, he discerns in the distance the vision of a possible satisfaction for which he might bid the Moment stay.

And here we should notice how closely all this bears upon Goethe's own life. The ideal that Faust learns to cherish, unremitting effort in a work which should set

the plain man's energies free for years ahead, was an essential part of Goethe's own. Even the particular shape that it takes here appealed to him with peculiar force. To look at a thriving countryside, so he wrote to a friend,[1] was the best way to understand how man's work could be lasting. And Faust's struggles with despair and disillusionment in the midst of prosperity were also his. The Death-scene to which we are coming now was written—there is every reason to think—when he was about fifty years old, with a successful life behind him, and in a situation which, as he said to Schiller, could hardly be more favourable than it was. Yet it was in those years that he also told Schiller how he was only "stumbling along," "in an alien element," "without the slightest inner satisfaction." "However," he added, "since it is true, as I keep learning more and more plainly from Polygnotus and Homer, that it is really part of our business here to imagine Hell, all this may serve for a life quite as well as anything else." [2]

The classical references are to the lost pictures of Polygnotus depicting the underworld and to the presence of Ulysses among the Shades, but clearly Goethe's meaning is wider; he was envisaging all life as hell. This would seem strange to anyone who took the conventional view of him as the most self-satisfied and complacent of men. But, as we have seen, there was far more in him than that. He knew the depths and the deserts and the pitfalls, and the sense of them was constantly recurring. At the threshold of old-age he wrote:

> "The sins of youth—are they under your feet?
> Now you've the sins of old-age to meet."

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[1] To von Beulwitz, 18th July 1828.
[2] 13th December 1803.

When he published his later series of "Gentle Reminders" (*Zahme Xenien*) he imagined the critics saying:

"Those verses of yours are the bitterest stuff," and himself replying:

> "What would you have the old man do?
> The man who wrote *Werther* at twenty-two
> Finds seventy-two uncommonly tough." [1]

His serene courage was not the result of a gay nature; it was a deliberate self-conquest:

"Had you seen as much as I've seen of the strife," he wrote, "you'd try, as I do, to love your life." [2]

"Ruhe, Ruhe, nur Ruhe!" the old man would exclaim in talk with his friends, rather for himself than for his company, and more and more in his writings he lays stress on "Heiterkeit" ("Cheerfulness"), because it is the sign of victory. His refusal to "give up at a miserable sixty years," his determination to use to the full the last embers of the sinking fire, sprang from the same deliberate choice. Thus it is typical of his whole attitude to life that the last assault upon the centenarian Faust should be made by "Sorge" ("Care"), and also that the man should find reserves of strength to meet it.

When Mephistopheles and his three bring the news of the burning to Faust, they get a curt dismissal:

> "*Faust.* I told you, and you stopped your ears,
> Exchange I meant, not robbery.
> The plunder from this wretched raid,
> I curse it! Keep it for yourselves!"
> (11,370–73.)

They go away muttering, and Faust never again, to

[1] *Zahme Xenien.* Goethe met Charlotte Buff in June 1772.
[2] *Ibid.*

his knowledge, meets Mephistopheles. He is left alone in his palace, looking out towards the sinking flames. The night has grown very dark.[1]

"*Faust* (*on the balcony*).
The stars are hidden in the sky,
The fire dies down that flamed so high:
There's a shiver of wind on the flickering ash,
And the smoke rolls up through the murky air!
Rash the command, and the deed too rash!—
What are those shadows gliding there?
(*Midnight. Four Gray Women appear.*)

The First. My name is Dearth.
The Second. And mine is Debt.
The Third. And mine is Poverty.
The Fourth. Mine is Care.
The Three (*together*).
The door is bolted! We cannot get in!
The master is wealthy: there's no room within.
Dearth. It would make me a shadow.
Debt. And nothing of me.
Poverty. He'd show me his back, so pampered is he.
Care. Three of us cannot and must not dare;
But one will slip through the keyhole,—Care.
(*She vanishes.*)
Dearth. Come, gray sisters, we must not stay!
Debt. I cling to your side wherever you are.
Poverty. And I'm at your heels the whole of the way.
The Three. The clouds are scudding, the stars have fled!
Behind us, behind us, from far, from far,
He is coming, our brother, our dear brother,—Death.
Faust. Four of them came; I only saw three go,
And what their saying meant I could not know.
Strangely it rang, as though they spoke of dearth;
And then there came a dreary echo—Death.
Hollow it rang, ghostly and dull and low.
I have not fought my way to freedom yet.
Could I but banish sorcery, forget
My magic, stand, stripped of it utterly,
A man, O Nature! face to face with thee,
It might be worth while then to be a man.

[1] It is at this point that the earlier writing begins. See Appendix.

Such was I once, when first my day began,
Before I sinned and sought the outer Dark,
Before I cursed the world and my own heart.
But now the air is full of spectral shapes,
And none may shun them now, and none escapes.
If one day's laughter runs in lucid streams,
The night will maze us in a net of dreams;
We come back joyous from the fields in bloom,
A bird croaks! What's he croaking for? Our doom!
Early and late by superstition clogged—
It clings, it threatens, all our steps are dogged:
And thus we stand alone and terrified.—
Why should the door creak? No one came inside.
(*Startled.*)
Is some one there?

Care. Since you have asked me, Yes.

Faust. Who are you? Say!

Care. Enough that I am here.

Faust. Away, away!

Care. This is my proper place.

Faust (*at first enraged, then quietly to himself*).
Take care, Faust! Speak no word of sorcery!

Care. Though no ear should hear me sing,
Through the heart my threats shall ring.
Changing form from hour to hour,
Still I wield my awful power,
On the waters, on the land,
Mate and torturer still at hand,
Never sought for, ever found,
Feared and flattered, cursed and crowned,
Hast thou not known me? I am Care.

Faust. I have but raced through all the earth.
I clutched my pleasure by the hair.
What did not please, I flung aside,
What slid from me, I let it slide.
I have but craved, enjoyed, and craved again,
Gone storming through my life amain.
Lusty I was and daring, but with age
I have grown cautious; I am now a sage.
I know this old round earth sufficiently;
What lies above the clouds no man can see.
Fool, who must thither turn his dazzled eyes
And dream of some great Comrade in the skies!

Let him stand fast and look about him here.
This world's his answer, if he can but hear.
What use in hungering for eternity?
Man only knows what he can grasp and see;
So let him wander all his lifelong day;
When spirits mutter, still pursue his way,
In his advance set all his pain and pride,
Still, every moment, still unsatisfied!

Care. Once I make a man my own,
The worth of all his world has gone.
Eternal dusk blots out the skies,
No sun can set, no sun can rise:
Though the outer sense be whole,
Darkness houses in his soul.
He can taste nor good nor pleasure
In his dearest earthly treasure:
Joy and grief alike are dead,
In plenty's lap he is not fed:
Be it rapture, be it sorrow,
He thrusts it off until the morrow,
Waits for what the Future gives,
Waits, and therefore never lives!

Faust. Silence! I'll not be cozened by your cry!
It sings of madness that I will not hear!
Begone! Your ghostly litany
Would drive the bravest to despair.

Care. Shall he come? Or shall he go?
He can say nor Yes nor No.
Midway on the road he waits,
Drawing back each step he takes,
Lost, whatever path he try,
Seeing everything awry,
Burthening himself and others,
Even while he breathes he smothers,
Smothers not, though life be dust,
Despair he cannot, cannot trust.
To and fro without remission,
Forced surrender, false submission,
Fancied freedom, fearful quaking,
Broken sleep and dreary waking,—
Thus I chain him to his cell,
Thus I make him fit for hell!

Faust. Accursed spectres! So we men are brought

Into your clutch: the simplest days are caught
In the black meshes of your mockery.
Sore task, I know, from spirits to work free,
The ghostly bonds they weave what man can tear?
But, O thou stealthy, mighty phantom, Care!
For ever I defy thy mastery!

Care. Then, as I pass in curses, drink of me!
All their long years of living men are blind,
Faust, at thy life's end, be it so with thee!
(*She breathes on him and goes.*)

Faust (*blinded*).
The night has fallen dark and darker still,
But in my soul there burns a radiant light;
What I have planned I hasten to fulfil;
The master's word, in that alone is might.
Up from your beds, my servants, every man!
Give me the brave sight of my daring plan!
Out with the spade, and put forth all your strength!
The work that faltered must go forth at length.
Leadership, discipline and industry
Win us the fairest and the finest fee.
To crown a great work by a perfect end,
One master-mind is worth a thousand men."
(11,378–510.)

This blinding of Faust has often been discussed, but one of Goethe's letters to Schiller seems to give the clue to his meaning. As we have noticed, he realised acutely the dangers and disappointments in every kind of work. They are such that some men can only keep up their courage by the refusal to see any obstacles. This is a defect: Goethe always thought it better to see things as they are, but for some men—and Faust with his craving for immediate results is one of them—it may be an inevitable defect; it is, so to speak, the scar he carries from his victory over Sorge. She leaves him, but it is through the blast of her breath that he is blinded.

That men blind themselves from what is, after all, a fine instinct of self-defence Goethe noticed in every sphere of activity, but especially in the life of action.

"What surprises us so much in the life of thought," he wrote, discussing the obstinacy of controversialists,[1] "we see every day in practical life. If a man is to make anything at all out of his own individual, onesided, helpless existence, the compulsion on him to shut his eyes against unfavourable circumstances and simply struggle forward as hard as he can is so great that he will refuse to believe his own senses. And yet the reason of this lies in the deeper and nobler part of human nature: in practical life man must always be constructive, and at bottom he has not to trouble himself about what *can* happen but only about what *ought* to happen. Now this latter is always an Idea, and man is a concrete being, living under concrete conditions: and thus the self-deception continues, giving the glory of the Idea to the concrete."

The concluding sentences sum up Goethe's view of conduct. What matters in the last resort is single-minded effort, and this matters so much that wisdom approves it even at the cost of blindness. Here, at the close of the drama, this conviction is reflected in one of its grimmest and greatest scenes. The highest moment of Faust's life does indeed come to him now, blinded though he is, because his effort has worked itself free from the dark powers of magic. He is determined now not to stifle his reason in order to satisfy his cravings. He will do his work without that. But the external achievement is nothing in itself, while he fancies it everything. In his blindness he hears the sound of digging: he supposes it to come from his labourers working at the dykes and he takes Mephistopheles to be the foreman. In fact the sound comes from the digging of his grave by the Lemurs, ghostly creatures of classical mythology, half-dead and half-alive, and Mephistopheles is directing

[1] To Schiller, 10th February 1798.

them for the purpose. What does that matter? Faust has at last set himself to a work which, uniting him with other men by natural means, gives him the real "joy of creating from within." [1] Thus he perceives the Moment in a setting in which he had never known it before, linked with all other elements of value, and so he foresees how he could approve it and bid it "stay." He had promised Mephistopheles that all Time might be over for him, if ever that time should come. It is coming now, and Death may come with it and the ghastly company of the Lemurs, as Goethe conceived them, "pitiable creatures, with just enough sinew and muscle remaining to let them hobble about and not turn into naked skeletons falling to pieces at a touch." [2] Faust wins his freedom in their despite.

"*Meph.* (*in front as foreman*).
About, about! And in and out,
Lemurs, ye shambling creatures!
Patched sinews, bones, and ligaments,
Poor, half-dissevered natures!
The Lemurs (*in chorus*).
We come as you have summoned us,
And half we understand
It is about a countryside
And we must win the land.
Here are the pointed stakes for you,
The measured length of chain,
But what you want us all to do
We have forgot again.
Meph. No need for art or skill to-day!
Just measure the spot in your usual way!
The tallest lay him on the ground,
The others lift the turf all round;
Dig a deep oblong, as they made
In our fathers' time with pick and spade!

[1] "Schöpfungs Genuss von innen" (*Paralipomena*, 2. *Faust*, Insel-Verlag). See Appendix.
[2] Letter to Sickler, 28th April 1812.

To the narrow house from the palace-hall,
That is the dull end of it all!

The Lemurs (*with mocking gestures, digging the grave*).

When I was young and lived and loved
Methought it rare and sweet:
Where the revellers sang and the laughter rang
I stayed my lingering feet.
But age has caught me with his crutch;
I shall not dance again:
I stumbled over a yawning grave,—
What opened it just then?

Faust (*coming out of the palace, feeling his way by the door-posts*).

With what delight I hear the clink of spades!
It is the multitude who toil for me:
They give the earth peace with herself at last,
To the proud waves they set their limits fast,
And put a mighty barrier round the sea.

Meph. (*aside*).

And yet for us, and only us, this labour!
With all your dykes and platforms, most and least,
You'll give Dan Neptune, our dæmonic neighbour,
In one short hour the most tremendous feast.
You're altogether lost and ruined now!
The elements have joined us, and they vow
That all shall come to nothing in the end.

Faust. Foreman!

Meph. Ay, ay!

Faust. Go, go, and rouse more men,
Thousands on thousands, all whom you can raise,
Encourage them with blame and praise,
Pay them, entice them, drive them all you can.
And I'll have tidings every day to tell
How the dam's growing, if the dyke goes well.

Meph. (*aside*).

But from the tidings told me, I
Heard of no dyke, only of one to die.

Faust. A foul swamp stretches to the mountain's feet,
And poisons all the work that I have done:
If I could drain the marsh and make it sweet
Then my last deed would be my grandest one.
I'd open room for millions on the earth,
Not safe, not safe, I know, but free to work.
Green are the fields and fertile: herds could graze

And men live gladly on the new-found soil,
And on the great hill-barriers that they raise,
Strong in the nation's valiancy of toil.
Within the wall a land of Paradise,
Without the fury of the flood may rise,
For where it gnaws and threatens to devour
The gap is closed by the People's thronging power.
Yes, now this thought shall have my whole allegiance,
This word high-throning Wisdom knows for true,
That only he deserves his life, his freedom,
Who wins them every day anew.
Thus, compassed round with every danger here,
Boy, man and greybeard fill the gallant year.
That is the life and vigour I would see,
Standing with free men on a soil that's free:
Then to the passing moment I could say,
'Thou art so beautiful, wilt thou not stay?'
The centuries to come will keep the trace
Of what I have accomplished in my place.
Dreaming, I draw that far-off rapture near
And win my highest moment now and here.

(*He sinks back. The Lemurs seize him and lay him on the ground.*)

Meph. No joy could soothe him, nothing satisfied,
So forth he wooed and wooed on every side,
Till the worst, emptiest moment that he passed
Was just the one the poor fool wished to last.
He who withstood me, countering force with force,
Time holds him now, the greybeard lies a corse.
The clock runs down—

Chorus. Runs down! Dumb as the night is dumb.
The pointer drops.

Meph. It drops. The end has come.

Chorus. All's over now.

Meph. Over? A stupid word!
Over, and why?
Over and nothing left! All lost and gone!
And what then has the eternal making done?
To make and sweep what's made to nothingness?
'All's over now!' Why, what is that to mean?
Over! It might as well have never been,
And yet it runs its round as though it were.
I'd much prefer the Eternal Emptiness.

(*Faust is put in the grave.*)

Lemur (*solo*).
O, who has built the house so ill
With shovel and with spade?
Lemurs (*chorus*).
For thee, dull guest in the hempen shirt,
It was only too well made.
Lemur (*solo*).
And who has furnished the hall so ill
With never a table or chair?
Lemurs (*chorus*).
It was only let for a little while,
So many the claimants were." (11,511–611.)

Here, then, is the conclusion of Faust's life on earth. And since he speaks of satisfaction in the Moment, and since Mephistopheles is still in his service, though discredited and disowned, the question may be asked, who has won the wager that the two made at the beginning? On this point we have Goethe's own decision. Mephistopheles, he said, "could only half win," and even if Faust was still "half to blame," "the old Lord" could use his "right of forgiveness." [1] Faust does not, as a matter of fact, say to the moment "Stay!" He thinks only that he would be able to say it if his work were finished and he saw the result in a free and united people. And there are other points even more important than this. The satisfaction that he does anticipate is not to be derived from mere enjoyment or excitement, but from work. But it was satisfaction from mere enjoyment or excitement that Mephistopheles had wagered he would give, and Faust that he would not accept. And, finally, death is not the end. Faust's adventure is not over: it is only beginning. He is dead but not extinguished, and

[1] Letter to Schubarth, 3rd November 1820. "Mephistopheles darf seine Wette nur halb gewinnen, und wenn die halbe Schuld auf Faust ruhen bleibt, so tritt das Begnadigungs-Recht des alten Herrn sogleich herein, zum heitersten Schluss des Ganzen."

there follows a struggle for his soul between Mephistopheles and the angels, who, as the day is dawning, come down to fight for him, while Mephistopheles, aware that his quarry may escape him, gathers his devils to besiege the grave and commands the monstrous mouth of hell to open, as an earnest of his triumph:

"The toothed jaws gape; and out from the ravine
A savage flood of fire rushes forth,
While far below through the foul smoke are seen
The dismal mansions of eternal wrath.
The red flames boil and seethe up to the brim;
Thither the damned, hoping for rescue, swim,—
The huge hyæna grinds them, spews them back
To the old anguish of the burning track.
In every corner there's so much that's new,
Such endless horrors in the tiniest span!
We do quite well to frighten sinful man,
Only he never will believe it's true.
(*To the fat devils with short straight horns*).
You burly rascals with your cheeks a-burning,
Warm and well-fed on sulphur fresh from hell,
Stump-necks that never tire and know no turning,
Look under here, watch carefully and well,
To see if there's a gleam of phosphorus there!
That's the fine soul, sweet Psyche, winged and fair:
Pluck her, she's nothing but a loathsome worm.
I stamp her with my seal, then out you go,
Out with her to the whirling fiery storm!"

(11,644–663.)

. . . . . .

(*A glory appears above on the right.*)

The Heavenly Host. Follow, O follow,
Ye sons of the sky!
Gently, ye messengers,
Bearing in trust
Forgiveness for sinners,
Life for the dust;
To all things sending
Glad signs of befriending
And peace as ye fly

Meph. Discords I hear, an odious silly droning,

Drifting from heaven with the unwelcome day;
It is the hateful boy-and-girl intoning,
The sort of thing the pious love, they say.

. . . . . .

Slyly they come, the fops, they're well-advised!
So have they filched us many a soul before,
And beaten us at our own trade of war;
They're devils just like us, only disguised.
You'd be disgraced for ever, losing him:
Make for the grave and hold on to the rim!

The Angel Choir (*strewing roses*).

Roses, all radiance,
Mystery, fragrance,
Fluttering, soaring,
In secret restoring,
On leaf-wings that hold you,
From sealed buds that fold you,
Hasten to blow!
Open the springtime,
Green and aglow;
Bring Paradise down
To the sleeper below.

Meph. (*to the devils*).

Why duck and dive? Is that the true Hell-trick?
Stand fast and let them strew and scatter.
Back to your places, gawks, and mind you stick!
They really fancy with this flowery matter
They'll bury the hot devils under snow.
It soon curls up and shrivels if you blow.
Puff at it, puff-balls!—O, enough, enough!
It's white already with your horrid snuff.
Not with such fury! Shut your mouth and nose!
Too hard, of course, each wretched bungler blows:
The golden mean no devil ever learns!
Past shrivelling now, it browns, it dries, it burns!
It's floating down in wreaths of poisonous flame;
Make head against it! Shoulder to shoulder!—Shame!
Their power's gone! And all their pluck as well!
There's something strange in the soft glow they smell.

The Angels (*in chorus*).

Flame of the flowers,
Blest frolicking showers,
Love they are bringing,

Joy they are flinging,
Take it who may!
The old true story,
The heavens' high glory,
Armies eternal
Of infinite day!

Meph. O damn them! What a silly show!
Head over heels my devils go
On the old track they know so well,
Turning their cartwheels down to hell.
I'll hope they'll like their bath to-night!
But I shall stand my ground and fight.
(*Striking out at the fluttering roses.*)
Fire-flies, be off! For all your fire
When once you're caught, you're only filthy mire.
Still hovering there? Be off, I say! Take wing!—
It's brimstone on my neck here, by the sting.

The Angels (*in chorus*).
Wherein ye have no part,
Of that beware!
What stings and wrings your heart
Ye may not bear.
Mighty our forces move,
High must our mettle prove:
Love succours only
Those who can love.

Meph. Heart, liver, head blaze furiously!
This element outdevils me!
It's a deal fiercer than my own!
That's why you make such an almighty moan,
Poor lovers, crost in love, as half-afraid
You twist your necks to spy your dear, the jade!
The same with me! What twists my neck awry?
And yet their deadly enemy am I,
And once could show it with a dauntless eye.
Has some strange magic pierced me through and through?
I really want to see the darlings too.
What holds me back that I don't dare to curse them?
Now if I let them fool me—why,
Who would be fool then? Who but I?
And yet the little creatures—I detest them—
Are really quite too fascinating—bless them!

You pretty children, I would like to know,
Are you not come of Lucifer's high race?
You are so fair I want to kiss your face.
You seem to me exactly right, just so.
All is so natural, all is so delightful,
As though we'd met a thousand times before,
All so desirable, kitten-like, and sprightful,
With every glance your beauty grows the more.
O, come to me! O, let me have one look!

The Angels.

Yes, we are coming. Why draw back so fast?
We come, and, if you can, stand firm at last.

(*The Angels, drawing nearer, fill the whole stage.*)

Meph. (*driven back into the proscenium*).

You blame us poor damned hell-fire wretches,
But you're the real, the dreadful witches;
Woman and man you lead astray.—
O, curse my rotten luck to-day!
Is this the life of love-desire?
The whole of me is wrapped in fire,
So that I barely feel my tortured neck.—
You hover to and fro, come down, I beg!
Be men of the world! Put out a shapely leg!
No doubt your grave looks suit you very well,
But if you'd only smile for once this way,
'Twould be a joy for ever, as they say:
I mean the sort of way that lovers look,
A ripple round the mouth, a little crook,—
It's easily done! You fair lad, slim and tall,
Your parson-airs don't suit your face at all,
Do, do but give me just one knowing wink!
You wear too many clothes, I really think:
These trailing robes are much too chaste, I find,—
They turn away,—O, look at them behind!
The scamps are too much for my peace of mind.

The Angel Choir.

Change into clearness,
Love-flames of the soul!
Who damn themselves
Let the truth make whole.
Let the spirit work free
Whom the fiend held fast,
Glad at last
In the One that is All.

Meph. (*recovering himself*).
How's it with me?—Why, Job-like, boils on boils,
A fevered wretch who from himself recoils,
Yet triumphs, too, over his own disgrace
When he can trust himself and his true race.
The devil's nobler self is saved within!
He sweats that ghost of love out through his skin;
The flame is dead and gone, the poison too,
And, as I should, I curse the lot of you!

The Angel Choir. O star-fires holy,
Float over his breast!
He lies, while you hover,
With saints at rest.
Give thanks and arise
In the rose-ring we wreathe,
For cleansed are the skies
And the spirit can breathe!

(*They rise, carrying away the immortal part of Faust.*)

Meph. (*looking round him*).
How now? What's happened now? Where can they be?
The baby-folk, they've stolen a march on me,
Off to the sky they've flown with their fine catch,
Right from the jaws of Hell they've learnt to snatch!
I've lost the prize I held, that splendid soul,
They've whistled it away just at the goal!
Where shall I plead now? Who'll attend to me,
Give me the dues I earned and legally?
In my old-age I'm cheated, put to shame;
And yet I know I've got myself to blame.
I bungled the whole thing and so I lost,—
O, when I think of everything it cost!—
To fall in love, lustful as any ass,
Could bring the tanned old devil to this pass!
Well, if so old a hand could fall to this,
A childish, silly, bread-and-butter bliss,
How God-almighty must the folly be
That in the end has made a fool of me!"

(11,676–843. *The end of the scene.*)

This intervention of the angels and their victory over Mephistopheles is not a mere theatrical device based on mediæval art. To dismiss it as "operatic" or to ignore

it is to overlook one of Goethe's profoundest convictions, the belief that spiritual help is given to those who help themselves, and that only through the gift can salvation be achieved. The absence of the angels would leave the drama unfinished and inconclusive. For the battle would be a drawn one but for the reinforcements that come from the sky. We misapprehend Goethe's conception if we disregard his belief in what Christian theologians call "Grace." That belief he emphasises here by every poetic means at his command, and he spoke of it expressly to Eckermann. He drew attention to the song of the angels that follows when, after their triumph, they carry Faust up to Heaven:

> "The soul that still has strength to strive,
> We have the strength to free."
>
> "Wer immer strebend sich bemüht,
> Den können wir erlösen."

"In these words," he said, "lies the key to Faust's redemption: in the man himself an activity that goes on growing higher and purer and, from heaven, the Eternal Love coming to his aid. This is in harmony with our religious belief that we cannot attain blessedness through our own powers but only with the help of Divine grace." [1]

At the same time Goethe has shown that Faust had to go through a stage in which he felt himself limited to his own effort and to the prosaic life of earth. This came, as we saw, when he defied the paralysing power of "Care." And it is not too much to insist that the stage itself is remedial. A man like Faust, always craving for something from outside, must learn to rely solely on his own activity if he is ever to do the work for the work's sake, and not for the wages. For him the

[1] *Goethes Gespräche*, 6th June 1831.

approach to genuine satisfaction can only be by this path, roundabout though it may appear. In his way, like any mystic, he must pass through the "dark night of the soul." It is only when he conceives the fruition of his plan as lying in a future which he will never see himself that he can envisage the possibility of contentment with the Moment; because it is only then that he is on the point of forgetting his selfish self. He never quite reaches this point, he is still dictatorial and still obsessed with the thought of his own achievements, but he reaches an idea of liberty larger than he has ever had. It is impossible to think that such a man could have attained even this degree of disinterestedness if his eye had been fixed on a comfortable Paradise where everything would be made up to him.

Thus Goethe, one of the most religious spirits in modern Europe, seems to have recognised that the loss of religious faith might be a necessary stage in growth. Through it a man may learn to set men free "not for price or reward." Goethe always felt profound sympathy with this mood of Faust's, a mood that the last generation might have labelled "Positivist." In old-age he endorsed this passage which he had written in middle-age. And in his twenties he had embodied the same feeling in the unfinished fragment, *Prometheus*. The Titan defies the God who shows him no sympathy: he goes on with his work in spite of this and of all disappointments:

"Didst thou dream by chance
I would loathe my life
And fly to the desert
Because not all
The blossoms of hope bore fruit?"

. . . .

"Here sit I
And fashion men,
A race like myself,
To suffer and sigh,
Rejoice and be glad, and defy
Thee, thou God, as I!"

But even in *Prometheus* there were indications that the last word was not to be defiance. The goddess of Wisdom hints at reconciliation. And in the later *Pandora* this is the final message to the Titan:

"Fare thee well, thou Father of Mankind!
And hearken!
Here on earth ye learn what's worth the wishing:
What 'tis well to grant, they know up yonder.
Great are your beginnings, O ye Titans!
But to lead us
To eternal Good, eternal Beauty,
That's a deed the Gods alone accomplish.—
Let them work, O Titan,
Let the Gods work!"

This double belief, that it may be good for a man to feel himself alone and that he never really is alone, meets us again and again in Goethe's writing. It underlies the "maxim" in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*: "The Gods teach us to copy their own work: but we can only tell what we are doing, we do not know what we are copying." [1] It finds expression in his own autobiography where, looking back on his first conception of *Prometheus*, he writes: "In the end a man is always thrown back on himself, and even the Godhead, it would seem, has so placed Himself towards men that He cannot always respond to their reverence or trust or love, at any rate not in the moment of stress. I had learnt early enough that in the hours when we most need help the only answer we hear is 'Physician, heal thyself!' And how

[1] *Maximen und Reflexionen*, 622.

often have I not had to say to myself in my misery, 'I tread the winepress alone!'" [1]

It is in loneliness like this that Faust had gathered strength for his last effort, and such loneliness makes the descent of the angels all the more impressive. It is their roses that disable the devils, while Faust himself lies unconscious.

Mephistopheles, stronger than the common ruck of his supporters, had stood his ground for a while, and if he could have endured the touch of the flowers, he too, as well as Faust, it is safe to guess, would have been rescued. But he cannot love, at any rate not yet, and it is only lovers that Love leads into the sky:

"Liebe nur Liebende
Führet hinein."

Goethe did not carry out the plan he had once cherished of restoring Mephistopheles to his old place in Heaven. But he did show that the celestial flowers do not leave him unmoved, and that is significant. Mephistopheles thinks at first that he loathes the angels, but he finds that he is drawn to them, almost irresistibly. He feels that they are his kindred; the Prince of Evil desires Good. Certainly that desire takes the coarsest form, for he is still a devil, and a gross one. But there is a fiery element in his lust that had never been there before, and a capacity for suffering. It is because he refuses to bear the pain of the suffering that he misses his chance, and that the "ghost of love" as he calls it, which has touched him for the first time, proves no more than a ghost. But those who read the drama through to this point, with the care and passion it demands, will be ready to believe that Mephistopheles gets another chance.

[1] *Dichtung und Wahrheit,* Bk. 15.

The successful struggle for Faust's soul is followed by a climax of joy in the heavenly world, a triumphant epilogue like the Fourth Act of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. This scene, however, does not appear to have been part of the original conception. For in the only sketch we have of Faust's final development and the defeat of Mephistopheles, Goethe's last note is, "Epilogue in Chaos on the way to Hell," a note that must refer either to the exasperated outburst of the frustrated devil that we have just quoted or to something planned of a similar kind.[1] And it might be said that there is no real necessity for anything more: the drama has reached its essential close. We know that Faust is saved and, if we have read carefully, we know what has made him worth the saving. None the less something more is needed for the right emotional effect, as imperatively as the Fourth Act is needed in Shelley's play. After the long and chequered story we require a vaster outlook, as vast as in the Prologue, and an assurance of forgiveness impossible without Gretchen. The faith in forgiveness was fundamental with Goethe: the difficulty for him was how to symbolise it. He decided to borrow his imagery from the Christian Church, since he felt that he must have imagery of some kind unless he were to lose himself in "formless generalities." The idea of the Virgin-Mother was sure to attract him, for it was as a woman, so he told a friend, that the ideal always appeared to him. Thus, as Seeley pointed out, there is something "Dantesque" in the close. But Goethe did not believe in the Christian symbolism as Dante did, and his conception of life was radically different. Dante conceived a heaven without

[1] The concluding couplet of the "Prelude on the Stage" points in the same direction. The dramatist is to carry us "From heaven through all the world to hell" (242). See also Appendix.

growth, only open to those who held a definite creed, and a hell without change. Only in Purgatory did he allow development. But Goethe has a heaven of advance, and allows the chance of growth even to his devils. Nor will he set before us any precisely defined end: his only guides are reason and love. Goethe has less intensity than Dante both as man and poet, but he is more humane and his outlook is wider. Even in his heaven, or near it, there returns the struggle with weariness and deadness that was stifling Faust at the beginning of the drama. The pain of this finds a voice in the prayer of the Pater Profundus, recurring, as the refrain of the Scherzo does in Beethoven's C minor Symphony, wistful and lonely in the midst of the exultant and compassionate close. What brings Dante and Goethe together in spite of all their difference is, as we said at the beginning, their common belief in the redeeming power of love. Gretchen, like Beatrice, helps the celestial embassy; Gretchen, like Beatrice, leads Faust at last through the spheres. But she never reproaches him as Beatrice reproaches Dante. She is too human for that, and such a motive would have savoured too much of remorse for Goethe:

"All the sins of human nature,"

he wrote for a motto to his *Iphigenia*,

"Pure humanity redeems."

"Alle menschliche Gebrechen
Sühnet reine Menschlichkeit."

But if remorse is barred, repentance fills this final close, a close which is also an opening. And the spirit of it, one may venture to suggest, like the spirit of Nereus when the Homunculus was born, recalls the spirit of *The Tempest*. The entreaties of the penitent women

and the prayers of Doctor Marianus spring from the same impulse as Prospero's charge to Ferdinand concerning Miranda, and as Shakespeare's words in the epilogue:

> "And my ending is despair
> Unless I be relieved by prayer
> Which pierces so that it assaults
> Mercy itself, and frees all faults."

But, while Goethe thus recalls his two elder and greater brethren, he is always himself, and never more himself than in the last eight lines, possibly the last he ever wrote, the song of the Mystical Choir—famous, and rightly so, through all the world of poetry—lines that ring out, in the original, mysterious and evocative as a noble phrase of music, clear, strong and sure. Once more the note of symbolism is struck, but here from the other side, the side beyond all lands and seas and spheres, the side of the thing signified. The prelude to those culminating lines in the heaven of heavens begins, characteristically, among the mountains of the earth. And here, as at the close of the *Helena*, the forward sweep of the poetry is such that it will be best to quote continuously save for a few omissions; letting it speak for itself, so far as it can through a translation. Hermits are praying in the wildernesses:

> "*Chorus and Echo.*
> Round us the forest-trees
> Whisper and stir:
> Rock-walled the mountains rise
> High in the air.
> Close cling the roots below,
> Close-set the tree-trunks grow.
> Wave follows foaming wave,
> Calm fills the quiet cave.
> Softly the lions come,
> Steal near us, shy and dumb,

Awed by the holy place,
Hallowed through love.

Pater Ecstaticus.

Brand from the burning bliss,
Seal of the Father's kiss,
Throb of the bleeding heart,
Foam from the wine of God!
Pierce me, O fiery dart,
Smite me, O flashing spear,
Scourge me, O flaming rod,
Shatter me, thunder-bolt!
Perish, the self that's nought!
Shine out in love afar,
Heart of the living star!

Pater Profundus.

As the deep chasms open at my feet,
Chasm on rocky chasm far below,
As the clear streamlets hurry down to meet
The turmoil where the seething waters go,
As the stark trunk, through its own native power,
Uprears itself into the airs above,
Such is the force that guides and guards Creation,
Such are the ways of the all-mastering Love.

There is a roaring all around
As shook the rocks and forests all,
Yet love is in the rushing sound
Where the abysmal torrents fall
To water all the valley-ground.
The lightning's leaping shafts of flame
To clear the poisonous vapours came
That hung within the heavy air.
Love's messengers from Him they were
Who makes and cherishes all things.
O, that they set me too on fire!
My spirit, inly cold and dry,
Stifled and sick and clogged with pain,
Drags at its chain of agony.
Comfort me, God, in my desire!
Send light into my soul again!

. . . . . .

The Angels (*in the upper sky, carrying the immortal part of Faust*).

One of our own is saved from hell

To join God's chivalry.
The soul that still has strength to strive,
We have the strength to free.
And if the watching Love in heaven
Leans down to take his part,
The Sacred Band will welcome him
Home to the open heart.

The Younger Angels.

Roses from repentant women,
Through their love grown pure,
Gave us power to win this treasure,
Made our high task sure.
As we flung them, evil cowered,
Devils faltered as we showered,
Love they suffered, not their hell.
Even that old Satan-king
Felt the burning and the sting.
Shout for joy! We've won! We've won!

The Older Angels.

Still there is dross of earth,
Heavy our burthen:
Though fire should purge him,
Still he is earthen.
When a strong spirit seizes
The elements' strength,
No angel can sever
The nature ingrown,
The one that is twain,
Never again!—
The high Love alone,
And none other ever.

The Younger Angels.

In the mist on the mountain-tops,
Close to our way,
I feel the stir
Of spirits at play.
The drifting cloudlets clear:
I see the Children near,
Hand in blest hand,
Loosed from the weight of earth,
Bound in a ring,
Glad of the strange new birth,
The vernal blossoming,

In God's high land.
Let the first he can know
Of the wealth that will grow
Be learnt in their band!

The Blessed Children.

And gladly we take him,
A chrysalis bound,
Pledge of an angel
We have found.
Loosen the swathings
That hamper him here,
Let the life of God make him
Strong and fair!

Pater Marianus (*in the highest and brightest cell*).

Here is the outlook free,
And the heart high:
Women soar upward,
Far through the sky,
Where in the midst shines One,
Star-crowned, serene,
Known by the glory shed
For Heaven's high Queen. (*He falls into an ecstasy.*)
O woman-soul of all the world,
Open the door to me!
Here, in this vast blue tent unfurled,
Show me thy mystery.
Smile on the love grown grave and sweet
That moves the heart of man,
The sacred rapture that would reach
Thy throne, if reach it can.
Stronger than all strength grows our will,
Hearing thy clear call,
And passion suddenly is still
If once thy peace may fall.

. . . . . .

Round her hovers
A delicate cloud,
Penitent women,
Tender, bowed:
They cling to her knees in the skyey space,
Breathing the pureness, imploring grace.

. . . . . .

(*The Mater Gloriosa soars upwards.*)

Chorus of Penitent Women.

Thou who art soaring
Up to thy place,
Through all the spheres
Of Eternity!—
O take our tears!
There is none like thee,
Giver of grace!

Magna peccatrix (*St Lucae* vii. 36).

By the love, lamenting, fallen
At thy dear Son's blessed feet,
Though the Pharisee despised it,
Shedding tears for balsam meet;
By the costly box of spikenard
Dropping fragrance for her Lord,
By the tresses, wiping softly
Feet of Him whom she adored——

Mulier Samaritana (*St Joh.* iv.).

By the well, where in the old time
Abraham led his flocks in drouth,
By the woman's pitcher, suffered
Once to cool the Saviour's mouth;
By the pure full water springing
Thence, as from its place of birth,
Brimming over, clear, enringing
All the lands of all the earth——

Maria Aegyptiaca (*Acta Sanctorum*).

By the solemn place of mourning
Where the stricken Master lay,
By the lifted arm of warning
Sternly thrusting me away,
By the forty years' repentance
That I bore in lonely lands,
By the blessed farewell sentence
That I wrote upon the sands——

The Three.

Thou, who from the chief of sinners
Wilt not turn away thine eyes,
Heaping riches of repentance
Higher through the eternities,
Take this child too in thy keeping,
Once, once only, lured to err,
Scarcely dreaming it was error,
And in fullness pardon her!

A Penitent (*once called Gretchen, nestling nearer to the Mother*).

Look down, look down,
From thy starry crown,—
There is none like thee,
Giver of praise!——
Turn to my joy and see!
My youth's dear lover,
His sufferings over,
My own beloved
Comes back to me!

The Blessed Children (*circling nearer and nearer*).

He soon will outweigh us,
So great he has grown,
So mighty of limb;
The care we have shown
He will richly repay us.
We were taken young
From the living choirs,
But he has learnt,
We shall learn from him.

A Penitent (*once called Gretchen*).

See, while the noble company surround him
And scarce he is aware
Of the new life, the sacred freshness, round him,
He grows, like them, most fair!
See how the old poor garments he puts by,
The clinging rags of earth,
And from the glorious raiment of the sky
The strength of youth shines forth!
O, grant that I may be his teacher here!
The new day blinds him still.

Mater Gloriosa.

Come! Higher, higher! He will feel you near
And follow you.

Doctor Marianus.

Look up! Look into the eyes that save,
O gentle, penitent hearts,
And thankfulness shall make you fit
For your dear heaven at last.
Let every nobler spirit serve
Ready before thy face:
O Maiden, Mother, Goddess of all life,
Grant us thy grace!

Chorus Mysticus.

The things that must pass
Are only symbols;
Here shall all failure
Grow to achievement,
Here, the Untellable
Work all fulfilment,
The Woman in woman
Lead forward for ever."

"Alles Vergängliche
Ist nur ein Gleichnis;
Das Unzulängliche,
Hier wird's Ereignis;
Das Unbeschreibliche,
Hier ist's getan;
Das Ewig-Weibliche
Zieht uns hinan."

Thus the whole drama ends, with a forward movement to the last, travelling from mystery to mystery.

APPENDIX

ON THE DATES FOR THE COMPOSITION OF *FAUST*

For any thorough study of *Faust* it is necessary to enquire into the dates at which the different portions were conceived or composed. Fortunately, most of the important questions can now be answered, either decisively or with a fair approach to certainty. It may be convenient for the reader if we summarise here the chief evidence for the views adopted in the text.

All students would agree that Goethe's active work on *Faust* may be divided into four main periods which fall within the following limits:—

1. From the first conception of the drama, possibly as early as 1769, up to the completion of the *Urfaust* before or shortly after his arrival at Weimar in the autumn of 1775 (7th November).

2. From the resumption of the drama at Rome in 1786 or 1787 to the publication of the *Fragment* in 1790.

3. From the renewed incentive given by Schiller in 1797 up to the publication of the First Part in 1808.

4. From the final impetus given by the death of Byron in 1824 up to the poet's own death in 1832.

Further research enables us to date more narrowly still.

First Period.—It cannot be absolutely proved that Goethe conceived the idea of writing a drama on Faust as early as 1769. But everything points in that direction. His own memories go back to that year, as we can see

from a late letter to Zelter (1st June 1831), where he says, "it is no small matter to carry out in one's eighty-second year what had been conceived in one's twentieth" ("Es ist keine Kleinigkeit, das, was man im zwanzigsten Jahre concipiert hat, im zweyundachtzigsten auszer sich darzustellen"). Schröer, in his edition of the play, also reminds us of the passages in Goethe's own letters of 1769 and 1770 recalling the circle of ideas noticeable in Faust's first soliloquies, *e.g.* the letter to Frederike Oeser (daughter of his teacher at Leipsic), 13th February 1769 (quoted above, Chap. III) contrasting the simplicity of Nature with the pedantry of book-learning, and referring to the experiences of a magician at night, "ein nachtforschender Magus." To this we should add the other letters about that date which we have also quoted in our text, especially the one at Leipsic to Behrisch where the phrases so closely resemble lines in the opening of the Gretchen-tragedy. Moreover, as we stated there (Chap. III), it is known from the Autobiography that Goethe had been fascinated by the story of Faust in his boyhood, that he was early a poet and had already written lyrics and plays which show considerable promise, and some of which foreshadow themes in *Faust*, for example the poem "An den Schlaf" praying that the mother should fall asleep, and the appeal of the girl to God against her lover in "Triumph der Tugend." To these may be added a reference to Faust's despair at the approach of death in the play *Die Mitschuldigen* (*Fellow-Sinners*), Act 3, c. 6, though this is more doubtful, as the little drama was worked over again at Weimar. General considerations also favour the year 1769. Goethe came home to Frankfort in the early autumn of 1768 and was lying there ill for some time, after his excesses at Leipsic. As he recovered he experienced something like a "conversion" under the influence of Susanna von Klettenberg, and, moreover, he flung himself for a while into the study of alchemy. He did not leave home for Strasburg till the April of 1770. *Faust* is exactly the kind of subject

that would have been likely to occupy his restless imagination during these two years (September 1768 to April 1770). And the one woman who up till then had made a strong impression upon him was the Gretchen of Frankfort. Her character and surroundings would be appropriate to the Faust-legend, for, as we have seen, Faust's longing for love was part of the original story, and so also was the perversion of it by Mephistopheles.

It is another question when the actual writing began. Goethe said more than once (see our Chap. III) that he had had the drama in his head for a long while before he put anything on paper. Here again we cannot be quite sure of the date, but Goethe's own memory gave 1773 as the initial year. "It is a different thing," he wrote in 1788 (1st March) "to write it out now from what it would have been fifteen years ago." There is nothing against the date of 1773, and it is supported by the admitted facts that in the early autumn of 1775 he finished a scene pretty far on in the First Part and that the whole of the original draft was fit to read aloud by the end of the year. "I have composed a scene for my *Faust*," he wrote on 15th September to the Countess Stolberg, and this scene, it is agreed, must have been the one in Auerbach's Cellar with the song about the poisoned rat, for he adds in the same letter, speaking of his restlessness, "I felt like a rat that had taken poison." That same autumn his friends were all talking about *Faust* and hoping for its speedy appearance, and one of them, Zimmermann, told a friend that when he asked Goethe how it was getting on, "he fetched out a bag filled with scraps of paper, emptied it all on the table and said 'There's my *Faust*'!" (*Goethes Gespräche*, September 1775). By the end of the year the *Urfaust* was sufficiently advanced for him to read it to the Court at Weimar, and Count Stolberg, his pious and aristocratic friend, writes characteristic notes about it and him. "One afternoon Goethe read to us his half-finished *Faust*. It is a glorious work, the Duchesses were much moved by some of the scenes. . . . Goethe is not

merely a genius, he has a truly good heart, but I shuddered when he spoke to me of giant spirits that will not bow before the eternal truths of revelation" (*Goethes Gespräche*, December 1775).

After the final version was composed Goethe destroyed this early manuscript and for years it was not known that any copy of it existed. But in 1887 a transcript was found in the handwriting of Luise von Göchhausen, a friend both of Goethe's and of the Weimar Court. Much speculation was set at rest by the recovery of this precious document. It showed among other things how much more of Part I had been written in the early days than had once been supposed. And this confirms the earlier date of 1773 for the beginning of the actual composition. Even allowing for Goethe's speed of writing when his imagination was on fire and after the theme had been turned over and over in his head, from two to three years is none too long a time for the amount and quality of the material which we find in the *Urfaust*, especially if we remember all his other activities at the time.

The *Urfaust* contained, and almost in the form adopted in the final version:

(*a*) The opening soliloquy of Faust, his encounter with the Earth-Spirit and the intrusion of Wagner: from line 354 (to give the numbering of the final version), "Hab' nun ach die Philosophey" (*Urf.*), up to line 605, "Und froh ist, wenn er Regenwürmer findet" (*Urf.*).

(*b*) The meeting between Mephistopheles and the Freshman, from line 1868, "Ich bin allhier nur kurze Zeit" (*Urf.*), up to lines 2049–50.

"Folg' nur dem alten Spruch von meiner Muhme der Schlange,
Dir wird gewiss einmal bey deiner Gottähnlichkeit bange."
(*Urf.*)

(*c*) The drinking-party in Auerbach's Cellar at Leipsic, from line 2073,

"Will keiner sauffen, keiner lachen?
Ich werd euch lehren Gesichter machen!" (*Urf.*)

up to the end of the scene, which differs more than usually from the final version and is for the greater part in prose.

(*d*) The whole of the Gretchen-tragedy, except (1) the bulk of the Forest-scene, from the opening line 3217, "Erhabner Geist," down to "Auch selbst Gelegenheit zu machen," 3341; (2) the bulk of the Valentine-scene, from line 3660, "So spukt mir schon durch alle Glieder" down to the end; and (3) the Walpurgisnacht. The death of Valentine, moreover, and something like the Walpurgisnacht must have been planned, for there are references to them in the Prison-scene and in the colloquy between Mephistopheles and Faust on the way back from the Brocken. Finally, as we pointed out in Chap. VII, the outburst of self-loathing on the part of Faust with the gibes from Mephistopheles, now at the end of the Forest-scene, were already in the *Urfaust*; only in the *Urfaust* they came *after* the seduction and on the night when Valentine was guarding his sister's door.

The Gretchen-tragedy was prefaced in the *Urfaust* by a little scene of four lines where Mephistopheles shrinks from a crucifix at the roadside and Faust rallies him:

"What's up, Mephisto? Why this hurry?
Why drop your eyes in such a flurry?
Meph. O, it's mere prejudice, I admit;
But I can't bear the sight of it."

This was omitted in the subsequent versions, but in the final draft something of the same motive recurs: Faust forces Mephistopheles to declare himself by adjuring him in the sign of "Him whom they pierced" (l. 1306).

After Goethe came to Weimar nothing more seems to have been written or even planned for the First Part until the Italian journey. But, according to his own account, he thought out schemes for the Second Part. As we observed in our text (Chap. IX), he told Eckermann (6th December 1829), when beginning the Second Act, that he had had it in his head for fifty years, which takes

us back to 1779. Two years before, when the *Helena*, which was to form the Third Act, was being published, he wrote to Zelter (29th March 1827), saying that it would be "a strange experience to see this phantom of fifty years in print at last." To Knebel he wrote (14th November 1827), that the plan of the *Helena* was older than the tall trees in his Weimar garden. And the letter to Humboldt, 1st December 1831, quoted in our first chapter, is to the same general effect. All this is only what we should expect. No dramatist familiar with the puppet-play could ignore the themes of the Emperor's Court, the evocation of Helen and Faust's death, while, on the other hand, Goethe's busy life as an administrator during the first eleven years at Weimar left him scant leisure for the work of composition on a subject of this magnitude.

Second Period.—There was found among Goethe's papers after his death a brief outline for the themes of the whole drama, the only outline that we possess with so wide a range. No critics date this later than 1799, after he had taken up the work for the third time under Schiller's influence. But in the opinion of competent scholars it is earlier still, and comes before or during the visit to Italy (1786–1788). There is much to be said for this. The whole tone of it suggests that the drama is still, so to speak, malleable, much more malleable than it could have been after the *Fragment* was published in 1790. Further, there are points in the language indicating an early period, namely, the repetition of "Dumpfes," "Dumpfheit," and the use of "Ideales" to denote what exists merely in a man's consciousness. In any case the document is of great interest and we give it here in full:

"Ideales Streben nach Einwircken und Einfühlen in die ganze Natur.
Erscheinung des Geists als Welt und Thaten Genius.
Streit zwischen Form und Formlosen.
Vorzug dem formlosen Gehalt
Vor der leeren Form.

Gehalt bringt die Form mit
Form ist nie ohne Gehalt.
Diese Widersprüche statt sie zu vereinigen disparater zu machen.
Helles kaltes wissensch. Streben. Wagner.
Dumpfes warmes wissensch. Streben. Schüler.
Lebens Genusz der Person von auszen gesehn erster Theil in der Dumpfheit Leidenschaft.
Thaten Genusz nach auszen zweyter Theil und Genusz mit Bewusztseyn. Schönheit.
Schöpfungs Genusz von innen. Epilog im Chaos auf dem Weg zur Hölle."

It is not easy to translate as it is so condensed, being made by Goethe for his own use, but we may give the following rendering:

"The mind's effort to influence the whole of Nature and enter into the whole of Nature.
Appearance of the Spirit as the Genius of the World and of Action.
Conflict between Form and the Formless.
Superiority of formless content over empty form.
Content brings Form with it,
Form is never without Content.
Make these contradictions sharper instead of reconciling them.
Clear cold effort after knowledge. Wagner.
Dim warm effort after knowledge. Freshman.
Personal enjoyment of life, from without. (First Part.) In the dimness Passion.
Enjoyment of activity, from without. (Second Part.) And enjoyment in consciousness. Beauty.
Enjoyment of creation from within. Epilogue in Chaos on the way to Hell."

In this little outline we can trace the main themes discussed in our text, as Goethe jotted them down for his own convenience. First the subtle temptation to what he himself called "natural magic," the attempt "to influence, further than is allowable, what we recognise as active and to co-operate, further than is possible, with the actual things that lie before us" (*Geschichte der*

Farbenlehre, in the account of J. B. Porta). Next, the appearance of the Earth-spirit with its stimulus to action. And, connected with this, Faust's longing to escape from the empty forms of mere pedantry into the "unformed," unregulated content of all exciting experiences. Such a content has its advantages. But, if it is a genuine content, it brings its own "form," its own "law," with it. And on the other hand, no true Form, no genuine Law, is without content. Knowledge and Experience, in short, must go together. But this, precisely, is what Faust does not see at the beginning, and the conflict gets sharper and sharper in the First Part. (Wagner and the Freshman, in their way, illustrate the opposition between them.) Faust himself in the First Part plunges into the enjoyment of the senses and a passion which, misunderstanding its own nature, aims above all at possession (*e.g.* Auerbach's Cellar, the Gretchen-tragedy). In the Second Part Faust is a stage further on. He aims at the enjoyment of the active life, though still as a privileged onlooker rather than as a worker (*e.g.* the Emperor's Court). Then at the enjoyment of Beauty in contemplation (*e.g.* the Helena). Finally, at the joy of creation as one who relies on his own effort (*e.g.* the Death-scene). This leads to the victory over Mephistopheles which he recognises on the way back to Hell.

If we admit that this outline may have been written before the actual composition was resumed in Italy —and possibly it was the outline Goethe meant in his letter of 1st March 1788[1]—then we can readily understand the choice of the scenes he made at this period to supplement the *Urfaust*. He would want to emphasise, (1) Faust's craving for an excitement to be got without any effort of his own, (2) the folly that divorces thought from life, and (3) the conflict between the good and the bad in his passion for Nature and for a woman. Hence we get, to take them as they come in the play: first,

[1] *Ital. Reise*. "Zuerst war der Plan zu Faust gemacht und ich hoffe, diese Operation soll mir geglückt sein."

the scene between Faust and Mephistopheles (ll. 1770–1867), where Faust demands that Mephistopheles should procure for him all the "griefs and glories of mankind," while Mephistopheles triumphs in the thought that Faust is turning his back on knowledge and on reason; next, the Witch's Cauldron; and, finally, the bulk of the Forest-scene. All these, we know, must have been written between the flight to Italy and the publication of the *Fragment* in 1790, and they were probably commenced in the reverse order. The beginning of the monologue in the Forest-scene (ll. 3217–3239) recalls, it has often been noticed, two early letters of Goethe's from Italy and one earlier still, written shortly before he left Germany. In the first (to Frau von Stein, 10th July 1786), he writes of his botanical researches opening out to him "the huge realm" of Nature, while in the others—(to the Duke, 12th December 1786, and to Frau von Stein, 2nd February 1787)—he speaks of getting into the country, "mich der herrlichsten Natur erfreuen . . . und die allzustrengen Begriffe der Kunst lindern," "eine Pause der allzustrengen Betrachtung mache." These are almost the words of Faust in the forest, *e.g.* line 3239, "Und lindern der Betrachtung strenge Lust." We have already noticed in the text how closely the whole scene is connected with his love for Frau von Stein, and especially with the escape into the wilderness during these months. All the probabilities, therefore, are on the side of its having been begun in the spring of 1787.

During the summer of that year he was again in Rome—the only summer he spent there—and we have a letter to Frau von Stein, unfortunately not dated, but ascribed by all students to August 1787—in which he speaks of going to the Borghese Gardens in the cool of the evening. This letter refers to ideas about a possible connection between Witches and "Magnetism" (the old word for Hypnotism), the whole subject being obviously in his mind. When we remember that he told Eckermann

(10th April 1829), how he had written the scene of the Witch's Cauldron in the Borghese Gardens, we can have little doubt that it was at least begun during this August. And it may have been this scene that he referred to in his letter of March 1788, when he wrote "I have already finished"—("ausgeführt")—"one scene," adding that he thought that it could not be distinguished from the old material. He would have been less likely to have said this of the Forest-scene, even if we assume that it was finished at this date, partly because it begins in what, for *Faust*, is a new metre, and partly because its conclusion, when it was concluded, was borrowed from the original draft itself.

There are still fewer indications to guide us for the precise date of the third scene in the *Fragment* of 1790 where Faust makes his general demands on Mephistopheles (ll. 1770–1867). But it is natural to infer that it was the last on which Goethe was working just before the publication, because the beginning is left raw and abrupt:

> "Und was der ganzen Menschheit zugetheilt ist,
> Will ich in meinem innern Selbst geniessen."

And it may be this passage which Goethe had in mind when he wrote to the Duke in 1789 (5th November) "Faust is fragmentarised, that's to say, as much finished as he is going to be this time."

Third Period.—From Goethe's correspondence with Schiller (during the eleven years between 1794 and Schiller's death in 1805), supplemented by other letters of Schiller's own and by occasional evidence from Goethe's papers, we can be pretty sure that the renewed work on *Faust* falls between the summer of 1797 and the spring of 1801. In the first months of their friendship Schiller had urged Goethe to take up *Faust* again (see his letter, 29th November 1794), but Goethe replied that he was afraid even to open the packet where it lay. However, Schiller stuck to his point, and nearly three years later

(22nd June 1797), Goethe told him he had definitely resolved to attack the whole work. The Dedication was composed at once and something done for the Prelude, but nothing, apparently, for the drama itself that year. To judge from "Amyntas," written that autumn (see our third chapter), Goethe feared at times that the anxieties of his position with Christiane might make coherent production impossible. The reverse was the case, that is to say, for the sadder and stormier passages of the work. References to the progress of the drama begin in February 1798 and go on at intervals through the letters until April 1801, when they cease altogether. We may therefore conclude that during this period, something over three years, practically all the additional material was composed that we find in the complete version of Part I (published in 1808 after Schiller's death). This is the general verdict of scholars and it is confirmed by the nature of the references. The output was rather more than equal in amount to the original draft begun twenty-five years before, and at least equal in quality. It contained the Prelude on the Stage, the Prologue in Heaven, the Walpurgisnacht, and all the passages that fill what Goethe had been accustomed to call "the great gap" ("die grosse Lücke") between Faust's fling at Wagner after he had dismissed him from his study (l. 605), and his demand in the *Fragment* that Mephistopheles should give him a full life (l. 1770). The new passages comprise Faust's yielding to despair at the thought of his failure and of how "Sorge" ("Care") will eat the heart out of any happiness, whatever he does; his resolve to take poison; his return to earth at the sound of the Easter-songs; his walk in the country among the common people on Easter-day; his renewed longing for escape; the appearance of Mephistopheles as the poodle; the scene in the study where Mephistopheles is forced to unmask, followed by the lullaby of the spirits and Faust's slumber; and finally the reappearance of Mephistopheles with the second song of the spirits and the making of the compact and the wager.

It is also known that during this period Goethe recast the Prison-scene, and wrote the first version of the menacing opening to the *Helena* (see his letter to Schiller, 12th September 1800), where the Spirit of Beauty appears threatened by real and imagined perils. This version, reprinted in the notes to the edition of *Faust* given in the Weimar-Ausgabe (I, vol. xiv), formed the basis for the present opening of the Third Act in the Second Part (ll. 8488–8802). But it seems that Goethe did not go any further with the Act until his final period. Probably at this time he was not in the mood for the serenity required to follow on the grave opening. Schiller wrote in the autumn of 1800 to a friend: "Goethe is back from Jena where he hoped to get something done, but he has only done a little at *Faust*, though that little is excellent. In general he is producing too little, for all the wealth of his powers. He is not calm enough owing to his distress over his miserable entanglement"—("seine elenden häuslichen Verhältnisse"),—"which he is too weak to alter" (*Goethes Gespräche*, No. 599). A modern reader may take a different view of Goethe's supposed "weakness," but Schiller's letter throws light upon the temper in which much of the First Part must have been written and also, according to our opinion, a long and important passage in the Second Part.

This passage contains the Death-scene and the struggle with Sorge that precedes it where Faust is blinded. Critics do not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the fact that Goethe said more than once, from 1815 to 1830, that the close of the play (as he then conceived it) had long been ready (*e.g.* in a letter to Zelter, 24th May 1827, cp. Eckermann, 24th January 1830).[1] When his friend Boisserée asked him in 1815 (3rd August, *Goethes Gespräche*) what the end would be, he replied: "I'm not going to tell you, I daren't tell you; but it's quite ready, and comes out really very good and splendid, a work of

[1] It is, however, fully realised by Otto Pniower in his valuable book, *Goethes Faust, Zeugnisse und Excurse zu seiner Entstehungsgeschichte.*

the best period" ("aber es ist schon fertig, und sehr gut und grandios geraten, aus der besten Zeit"). There would be only one period, at this date, which Goethe would call his "best period," and that would be the time at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century when he was working under the stimulus of Schiller. Further, the blinding of Faust, so important in the scene and so mysterious, finds a satisfactory explanation, and the only satisfactory explanation, from the clue given by the letter to Schiller on 10th February 1798, which we have discussed in our final chapter (p. 241 ff.). And this letter, so far as we know, is the only other place in Goethe's writings where he has used this particular parable of men being blinded through their resistance to the paralysing influence of Sorge. We can, moreover, fix the limits of the Faust-passage with reasonable certainty. In the spring of 1831 Goethe told Eckermann that he had recently composed the "beginning of the Fifth Act"—the Act where it occurs—"which up till then had been lacking,"—("den bisher fehlenden Anfang"),—although "the purport of it was above thirty years old" (which also takes us back, we may note in passing, to our date of 1798–1801 for what follows). On 6th June he gave Eckermann the new material and Eckermann writes, "I read to the place where the cottage of Philemon and Baucis is burnt to the ground at night, and Faust, on the balcony of his palace, smells the smoke, brought to him by the breeze." This fixes the commencement of our passage at line 11,378:

> "*Faust* (*auf dem Balkon*)
> Die Sterne bergen Blick und Schein,
> Das Feuer sinkt und lodert klein;" *u.s.w.*

At this point the poetry does, in fact, take a great leap forward, continuing with unabated fire and vigour to line 11,843, where Mephistopheles is left defeated at the mouth of Hell, complaining over his loss. And it is there, as we said in our text (p. 256), that in all probability Goethe stopped, until his final period. For the "Prelude on the

Stage" announces, as we noticed, that the dramatist means to "travel from Heaven through all the world to Hell" (l. 242). And the outline quoted in this Appendix ends with the note for an "Epilogue on the way to Hell." Moreover the internal evidence of the passage agrees with these indications. The metre recalls again and again the metres of the verses that filled "the great gap," particularly in the songs. And the stress on Sorge and on the value of the common people is noticeable in both, whereas those themes do not recur elsewhere in the drama.

Fourth Period.—In the summer and autumn of 1826 Goethe wrote to friends about his *Helena*, which was published separately the next year (1827). To Zelter he said (3rd June 1826) that until this new effort he "had not looked at it since Schiller's death" (in 1805), and to Boisserée (26th August 1826), that "the work had lain untouched for twenty years." From which we may conclude that he did not take up the composition again after the loss of Schiller until 1825, although doubtless, and indeed as the number of outlines he made for it indicates, he must have thought about it from time to time. And this agrees with our other data. In the May of 1824 (see Eckermann on the 26th), Goethe was not sure whether he would ever go on with the poem at all, but the news of Byron's death that same year proved an effective inspiration. The *Helena* was finished in 1826, as the entries in his journal show, and sent off to the publisher in January 1827: "*Helena eingepackt.*" Thus was at last completed a work embodying, as he said at the time, "one of his oldest conceptions, based on the puppet-play and as old as *Faust* itself, always the same at bottom though worked over many times." (To Humboldt, 22nd October 1826 and to Boisserée on the same day.)

We have no indication of any further writing in 1826 or in the early part of 1827, but the drama was much in his mind, as we can see from a letter to Zelter on the 24th

May (1827) about the opening of the Fourth Act, and in the autumn, according to Eckermann (24th September) he set himself definitely to work. And in the next year (1828) the first portion of the First Act was published (ll. 4613–6036), containing the scene in the mountains where Faust awakens to new life and the scenes of council and masquerade at the Emperor's Court. By the following winter (December 1829, January and February 1830) he had finished the scenes about the paper-money, the first evocation of Helen with the wonderful lines concerning "The Mothers," the spiriting of Faust back to his old study and the making of the Homunculus in the laboratory. Moreover, he had begun the Classical Walpurgisnacht. Eckermann is our informant here.

But the greatest achievement of his old-age was still to come. He was now over eighty, and during this year, from the spring to the autumn (April to November 1830), his son August and Eckermann were both away on a trip to Italy. He was left much to the company of his own thoughts, and on 5th July he wrote to tell the travellers that the Classical Walpurgisnacht was quite finished, adding on 9th August, "it has come to an end, or rather it has run out into the Endless." In the November his son died at Milan. The news shook the old man severely, as we can see from his letters to Zelter and the hæmorrhage that followed it. But he would not let it put a stop to his work. It is to this year that we must ascribe not only the close of the Classical Walpurgisnacht with its memories of Raphael's Galatea and the Mediterranean and Ulrike, but also the completion of the final Act, and in that Act not only, as we shall see, the commencement with the song of Lynkeus on the tower, but also, in all probability and with the possible exception of the last eight lines, the heavenly close where the Blessed Children carry Faust up to the feet of the Virgin and Gretchen knows that he has come. We saw reason for holding that the "earthly" close must have been written some time between 1798 and 1801 and that Goethe had stopped

at line 11,843 where Mephistopheles is left alone at the mouth of Hell. But it is plain that he had sometimes thought of adding more, as when he spoke to Falk of the shock it would be to the pious when they came "to the place where the devil himself is pitied and pardoned by God" (*Goethes Gespräche*, No. 3097). This remark is not dated, but it cannot be before 1802 and probably it is as late as 1820. (See the notes in *Goethes Gespräche*, *ad loc.*) The idea that Mephistopheles should be forgiven and redeemed Goethe, as we saw, never carried out, but what he said shows us he felt that another scene was required after the struggle at the grave, some scene of express comfort and pardon. This we get in the final and beautiful exaltation, from the song of the hermits—"Waldung, sie schwankt heran," *u.s.w.* (l. 11,844)—to the close. And we may reasonably conjecture that this is the passage he meant by "the end of the end" when he wrote to Zelter in the new year, 4th January 1831, telling him that the Fifth Act was "now all on paper." A veiled reference in a later letter to Boisserée (27th September 1831) seems to point in the same direction: "To you I may confess," he writes, "that, when circumstances were against me, instead of wearing myself out, I took up the end of Dr Faustus. I could not risk sinking beneath myself and so I had to get out beyond myself and reach a position from which the passing day and all that happened in it seemed matters of very small moment." Eckermann, as we noticed when discussing the Third Period, read the beginning of the Act for the first time on 6th June 1831, and on the same day he spoke to Goethe about the heavenly close as though that also were new to him.

The Fourth Act, which is comparatively weak except for the opening where Faust dreams of his early love and resolves to subdue the waters—an opening that seems to have satisfied Goethe himself (Eckermann, 13th February 1831)—was written against time and to a certain extent against inclination. The whole drama was now nearly

finished, and Goethe knew he could not count on many more "to-morrows," to borrow a phrase of his own. If he was to get it done he must make a push and "commandeer his poetry" as he had said in the "Prelude on the Stage" more than thirty years before. He determined to finish it before his eighty-second birthday on 28th August, and on the 5th September he told Zelter that he had done so, except for a few refinements: "You ask me about *Faust* and I reply that the Second Part is now complete as well. For years I have known exactly what I wanted, but only carried out the individual passages which appealed to me at the moment. And thus there were obvious gaps which had to be filled. To get it right I made up my mind that it must be done before my birthday. And so it was; the whole work lies before me now, and I have only to correct small points. Then I'll seal it up and it can increase the specific gravity of my next edition, whatever else happens to it."

Humboldt begged Goethe to publish it before his death, but Goethe refused. He sealed the Second Part "with seven seals," so that he might not be tempted to do anything more to it, as he confessed in his letter to Humboldt (1st December 1831, and cf. *Goethes Gespräche*, 25th August). But he did do more to it. On the 8th January 1832 there is a record in his diary of a talk about it with his daughter-in-law Ottilie, who, with her children, was such a comfort to him after his son's death, as he had told Boisserée in a touching letter the year before (20th March 1831). What they said we do not know, but he must have opened the packet for he speaks of "reading farther on in the manuscript." And on the 22nd, exactly two months before his death, he writes: "Further work at Faust, to make the fundamental themes clearer, which, in order to get the thing finished, I had dealt with too briefly." We may conclude from the tone of this that he made some addition. And it must have been an important addition, or he would not have noted it in his journal, which is chary of such entries. One cannot

help suggesting that it may have included the last eight lines of the whole drama, the song of the Mystical Chorus, the famous "Alles Vergängliche." These lines have a different character from what precedes them, though they form a supreme culmination to them. Imagery from Christian theology dominates the former, and Goethe's own symbolism the latter. The difference is unmistakable and all but startling, yet when he was discussing the close with Eckermann the year before (6th June 1831), neither of them said anything about it; on the contrary, Goethe took credit to himself for having adopted the Christian imagery so as to save his poetry from the risk of formlessness. The inference is at least possible that the lines in question did not exist at the time.

Whatever the truth on this particular point, a comparison of the acknowledged dates such as we have just made shows the baselessness of the beliefs, still too common even among lovers of Goethe, that he could not write living poetry, and of the very highest quality, after he was middle-aged, or that the Italian journey weakened his inspiration.

For purposes of reference it may be convenient to tabulate the chief results of our dating. Thus:

First Period.—From 1769 to 1775. (From 1773 to 1775 for the actual writing.)

The *Urfaust*, containing (with minor differences) the following passages, as now numbered in the final version:

Lines:

354–605 (Faust, the Earth-Spirit, Wagner).
1868–2050 (Mephistopheles and the Freshman).
2073–2336 (Auerbach's Cellar).
2605–3216 (The Gretchen-tragedy up to the end of the first Garden-scene).
3374–3659 (The Gretchen-tragedy from her song "Meine Ruh ist hin" to the first part of the Valentine-scene).
3342–3369 (Faust's cry of self-loathing and Mephistopheles' gibes, originally following the

first part of the Valentine-scene, but now at the end of the Forest-scene).

3776–3834 (Gretchen's remorse in the church).

The prose scene now called "Trüber Tag." (Faust and Mephistopheles on the way back from the Brocken.)

4399–4612 (The place of execution and the Prison-scene).

Second Period.—From 1786 to 1790. (Publication of the *Fragment.*)

Lines:

1770–1867 (Faust's demands on Mephistopheles).
2051–2072 (Faust and Mephistopheles set out).
2337–2604 (The Witch's Cauldron.)
3217–3341 (The first part of the Forest-scene).
3370–3373 (The concluding lines of the Forest-scene).

Third Period.—From 1797 to 1801. (First Part, complete, published in 1808.)

1–353 (Dedication, Prelude and Prologue).
606–1769 (Faust and the Easter-songs; Faust and Easter-day; Faust, the Poodle and the Spirits; Faust and the Wager with Mephistopheles).
3835–4398 (The Walpurgisnacht).
4399–4612 (Recasting of the Prison-scene).

(For the Second Part). The first versions of:

8488–8802 (Helen, the Chorus and Mephistopheles).
11,378–11,843 (Faust and Sorge, Faust's death, Mephistopheles defeated by the angels).

Fourth Period: From 1824 to 1832.

(Second Part). *First and Second Acts.*

Lines:

4613–6036 (Faust in the mountains; Faust and the Emperor's Court. Begun 1827, published 1828).
6037–7004 (The paper-money; The evocation of Helen from the Mothers; Faust and Mephistopheles in the old study; The Baccalaureus, Wagner and the Homunculus. Finished early in 1830).
7005–8487 (The Classical Walpurgisnacht. Finished by July 1830).

Third Act.

8488–10,038 (The *Helena.* Resumed definitely in 1825, published in 1827 with the old material worked over for the opening, 8488–8802).

Fourth Act.

10,039–11,042 (Faust and the Empire. Begun early in 1831, finished by 28th August 1831).

Fifth Act.

11,043–11,377 (Faust and "Naboth's vineyard"; Lynkeus on the tower. Finished by 4th January 1831.)

11,844–12,103 (Bulk of the scene in Heaven. Finished by 4th January 1831).

12,104–12,111 (The Mystical Chorus. 22nd January 1832).

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